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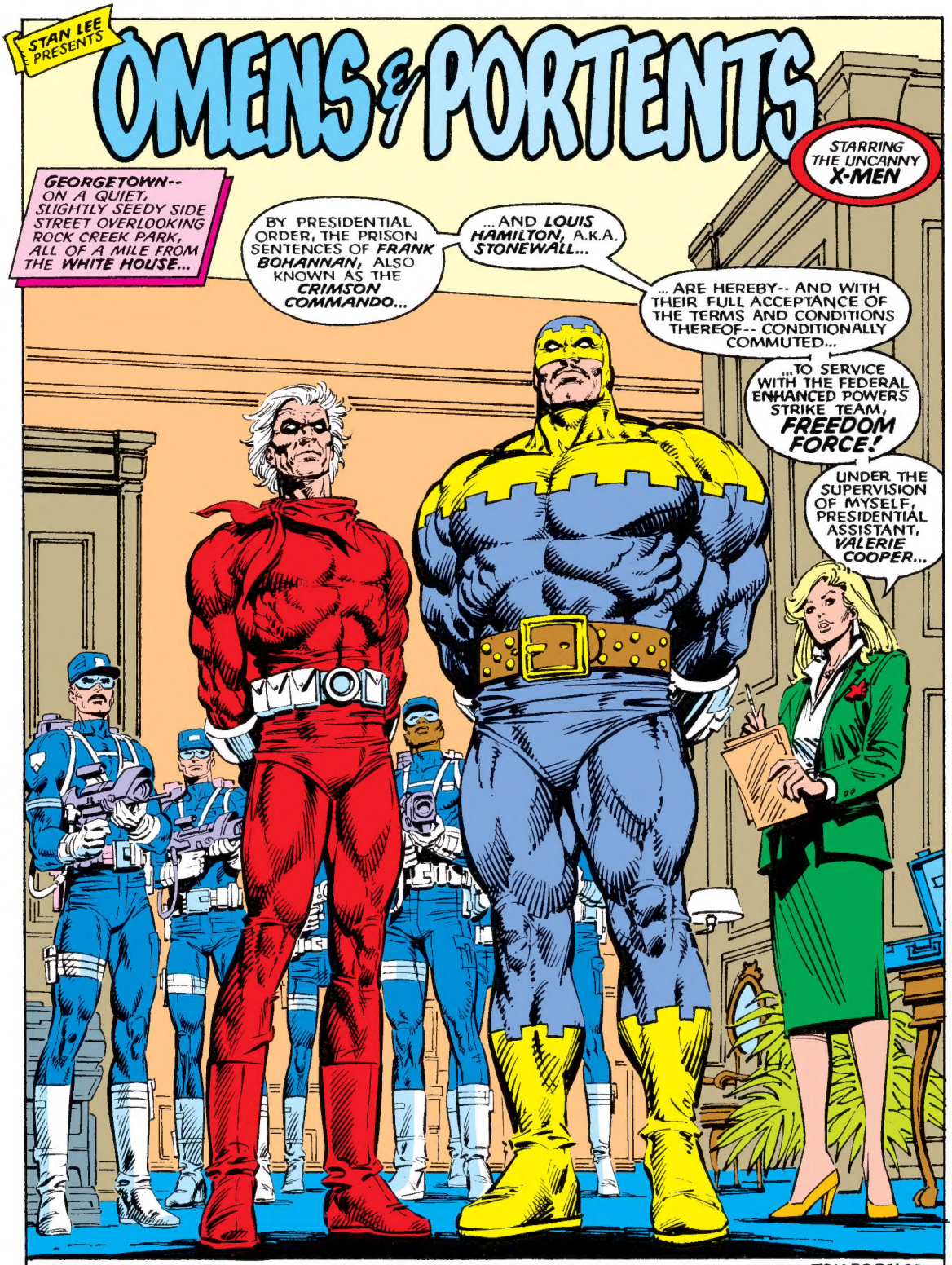

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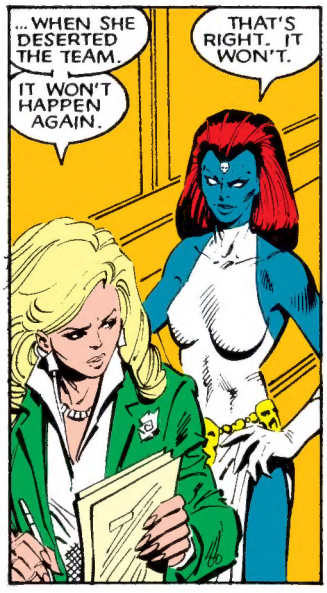
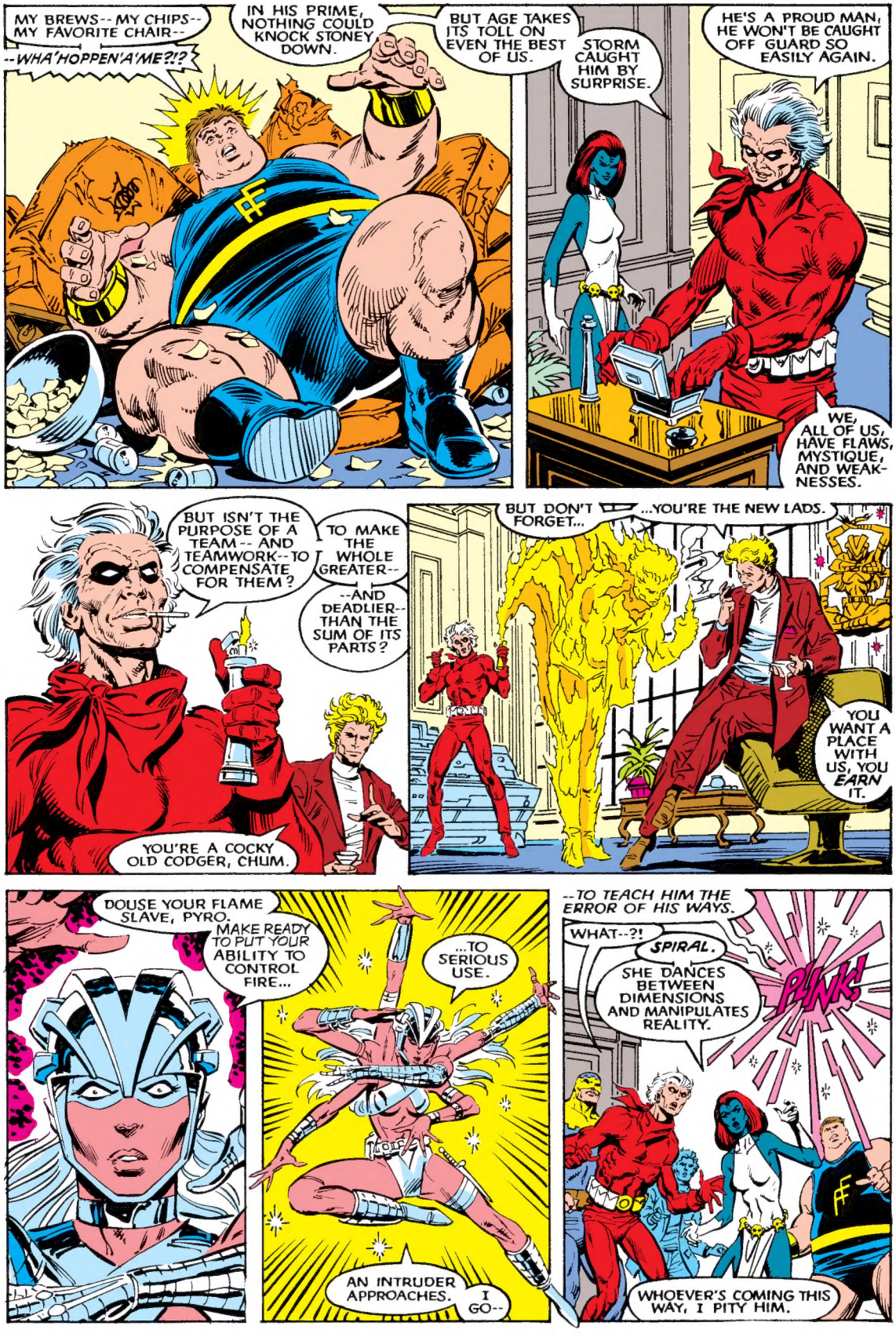
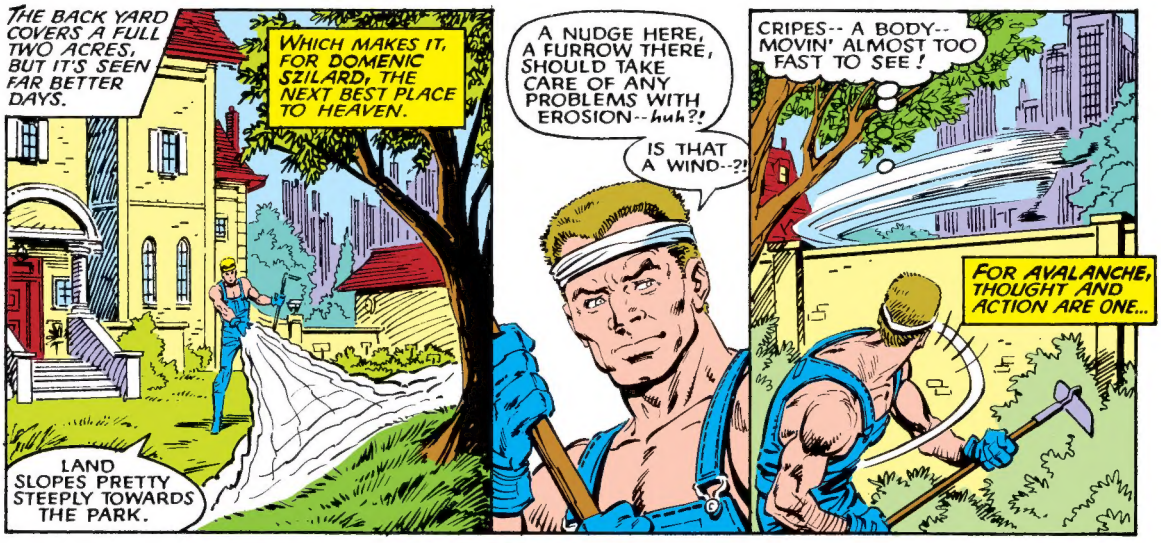
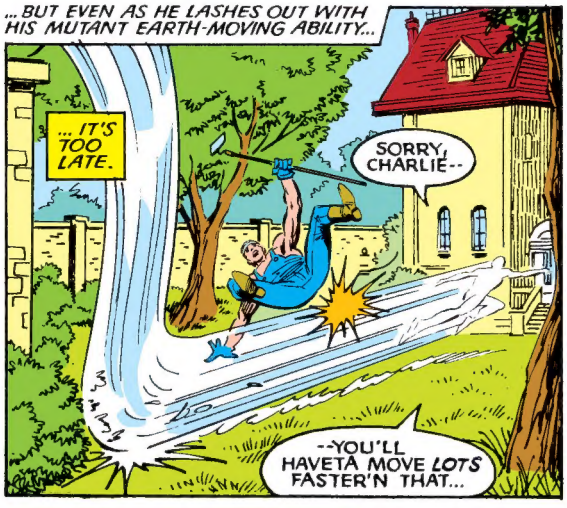
...AND THE UNIT'S OPERATIONAL COMMANDER, *MYSTIQUE*.

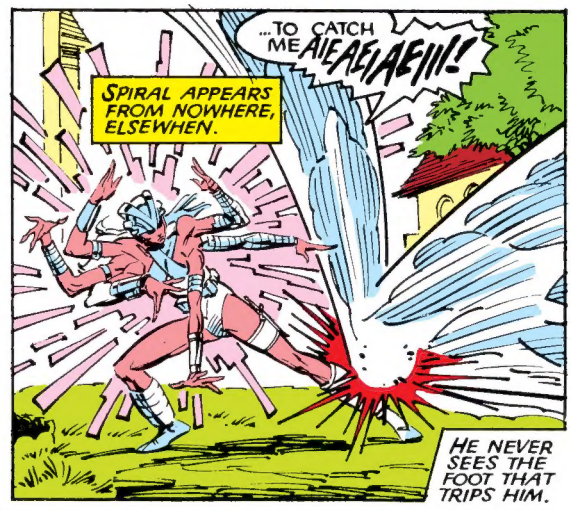
PERFECT.
JUST WHAT WE NEED, A PAIR OF OVER-THE-HILL, SECOND-STRING, RETREAD, WORLD WAR II "HEROES."
I MUST SAY, VAL, THIS SELECTION'S ON A PAR...
...WITH THE LAST RECRUIT YOU SENT US, *SPIDER-WOMAN*.
SORT'A MAKES ONE WONDER WHICH SIDE YOU'RE ON, Y'KNOW?
SPIDER-WOMAN WAS MY MISTAKE. THAT'S WHY THE REST OF YOU WEREN'T PENALIZED...

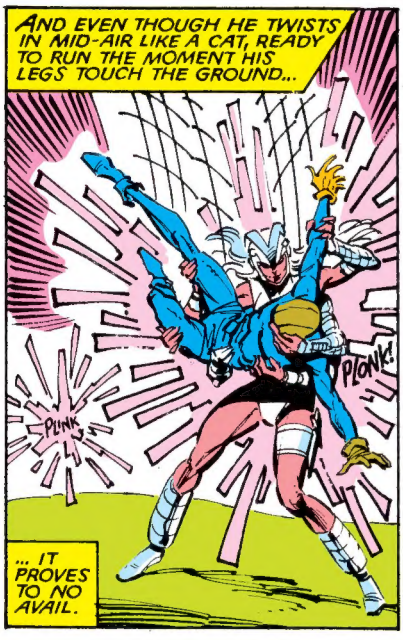


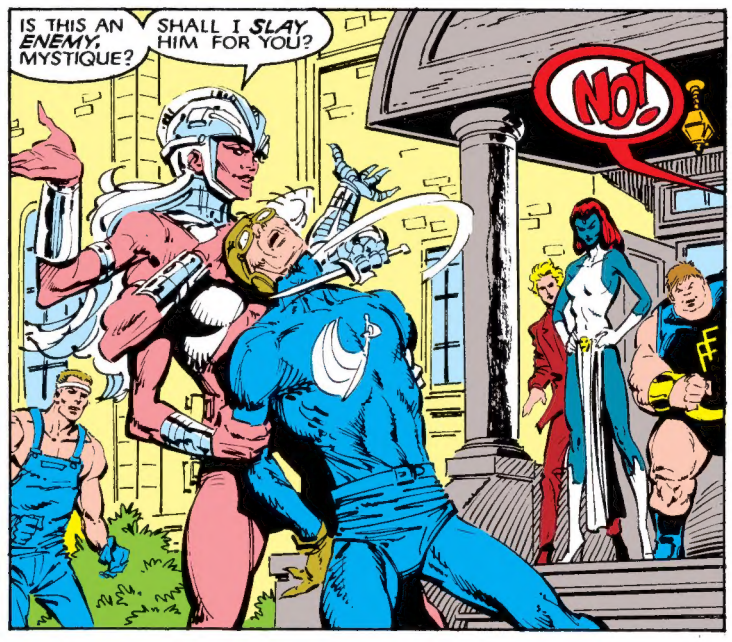

MY BREWS-- MY CHIPS-- MY FAVORITE CHAIR--
--WHA'HOPPEN'A'ME?!?
IN HIS PRIME, NOTHING COULD KNOCK STONEY DOWN.
BUT AGE TAKES ITS TOLL ON EVEN THE BEST OF US.
STORM CAUGHT HIM BY SURPRISE.
HE'S A PROUD MAN; HE WON'T BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD SO EASILY AGAIN.
WE, ALL OF US, HAVE FLAWS, MYSTIQUE, AND WEAK-NESSES.
BUT ISN'T THE PURPOSE OF A TEAM-- AND TEAMWORK--TO COMPENSATE FOR THEM?
TO MAKE THE WHOLE GREATER--
--AND DEADLIER-- THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS?
YOU'RE A COCKY OLD CODGER, CHUM.
BUT DON'T FORGET...
...YOU'RE THE NEW LADS.
YOU WANT A PLACE WITH US, YOU EARN IT.
DOUSE YOUR FLAME SLAVE, PYRO.
MAKE READY TO PUT YOUR ABILITY TO CONTROL FIRE...
...TO SERIOUS USE.
AN INTRUDER APPROACHES.
I GO--
--TO TEACH HIM THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS.
WHAT--?!
SPIRAL.
SHE DANCES BETWEEN DIMENSIONS AND MANIPULATES REALITY.
PUNK!
WHOEVER'S COMING THIS WAY, I PITY HIM.


THE BACK YARD COVERS A FULL TWO ACRES, BUT IT'S SEEN FAR BETTER DAYS.
WHICH MAKES IT, FOR DOMENIC SZILARD, THE NEXT BEST PLACE TO HEAVEN.
LAND SLOPES PRETTY STEEPLY TOWARDS THE PARK.
A NUDGE HERE, A FURROW THERE, SHOULD TAKE CARE OF ANY PROBLEMS WITH EROSION--huh?!
IS THAT A WIND--?!
CRIPES-- A BODY-- MOVIN' ALMOST TOO FAST TO SEE!
FOR AVALANCHE, THOUGHT AND ACTION ARE ONE...

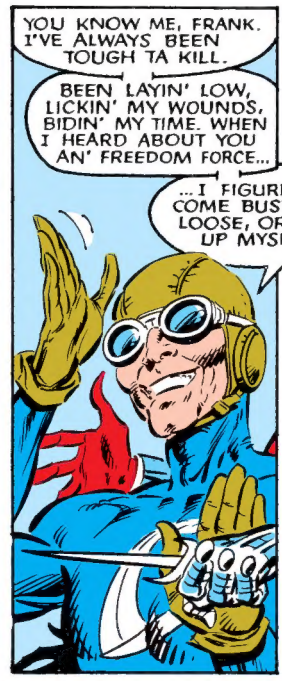

... BUT EVEN AS HE LASHES OUT WITH HIS MUTANT EARTH-MOVING ABILITY...
... IT'S TOO LATE.
SORRY, CHARLIE--
--YOU'LL HAVETA MOVE LOTS FASTER'N THAT...


...TO CATCH ME AIEAEIAEIII!
SPIRAL APPEARS FROM NOWHERE, ELSEWHEN.
HE NEVER SEES THE FOOT THAT TRIPS HIM.


AND EVEN THOUGH HE TWISTS IN MID-AIR LIKE A CAT, READY TO RUN THE MOMENT HIS LEGS TOUCH THE GROUND...
PLONK!
PLONK
... IT PROVES TO NO AVAIL.

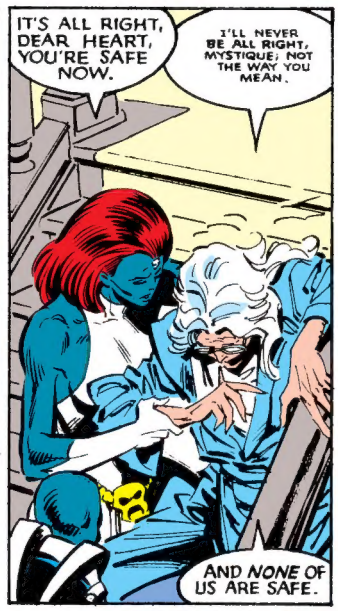

IS THIS AN ENEMY, MYSTIQUE?
SHALL I SLAY HIM FOR YOU?
NO!

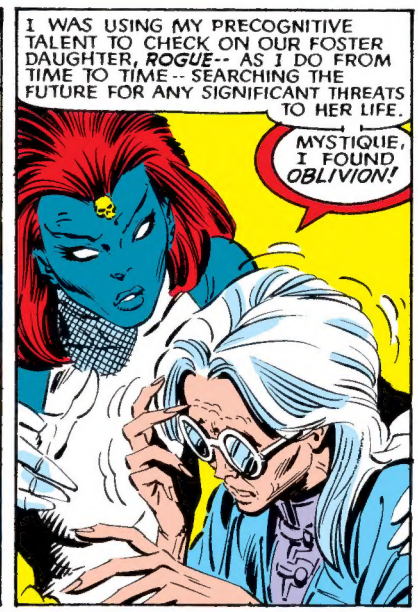
MYSTIQUE, DON'T HURT HIM! HE'S NO THREAT, HE'S A FRIEND!
THAT'S THE THIRD MEMBER OF OUR TRIO-- MARTIN FLETCHER-- SUPER SABRE!
BUT WE THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN KILLED, MARTIN.*
HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU SURVIVE?!
*IN X-MEN #216.

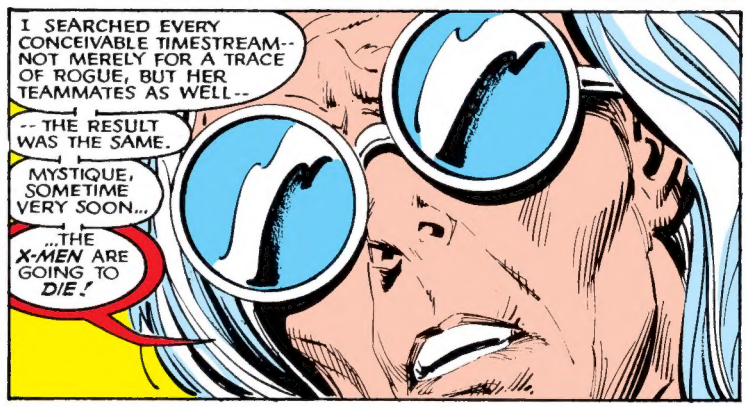

YOU KNOW ME, FRANK. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOUGH TA KILL.
BEEN LAYIN' LOW, LICKIN' MY WOUNDS, BIDIN' MY TIME. WHEN I HEARD ABOUT YOU AN' FREEDOM FORCE...
...I FIGURED I'D COME BUST YOU LOOSE, OR JOIN UP MYSELF.

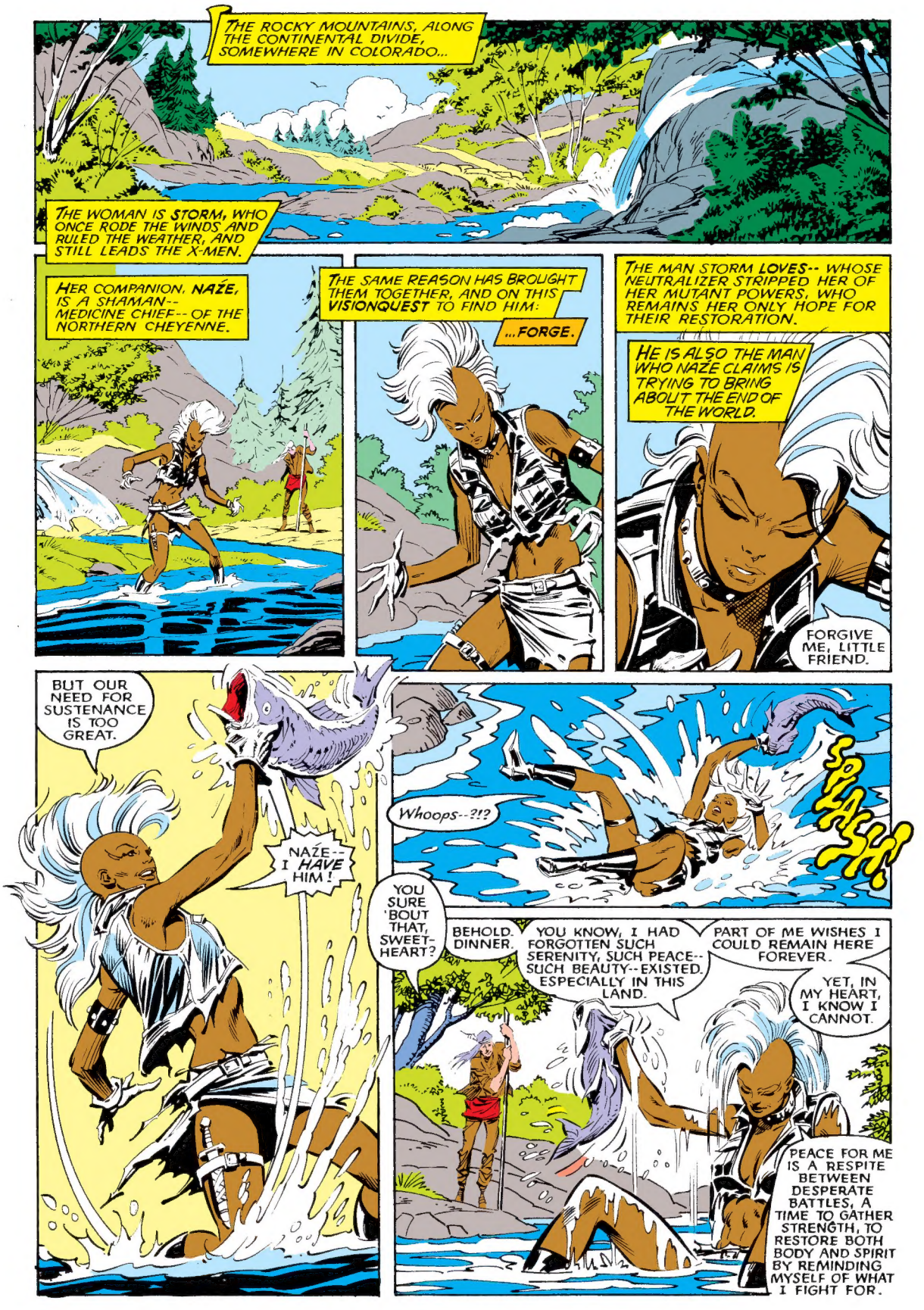
ARROGANT LITTLE MAN, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK...
AIEEEE
THAT SCREAM-- DESTINY!

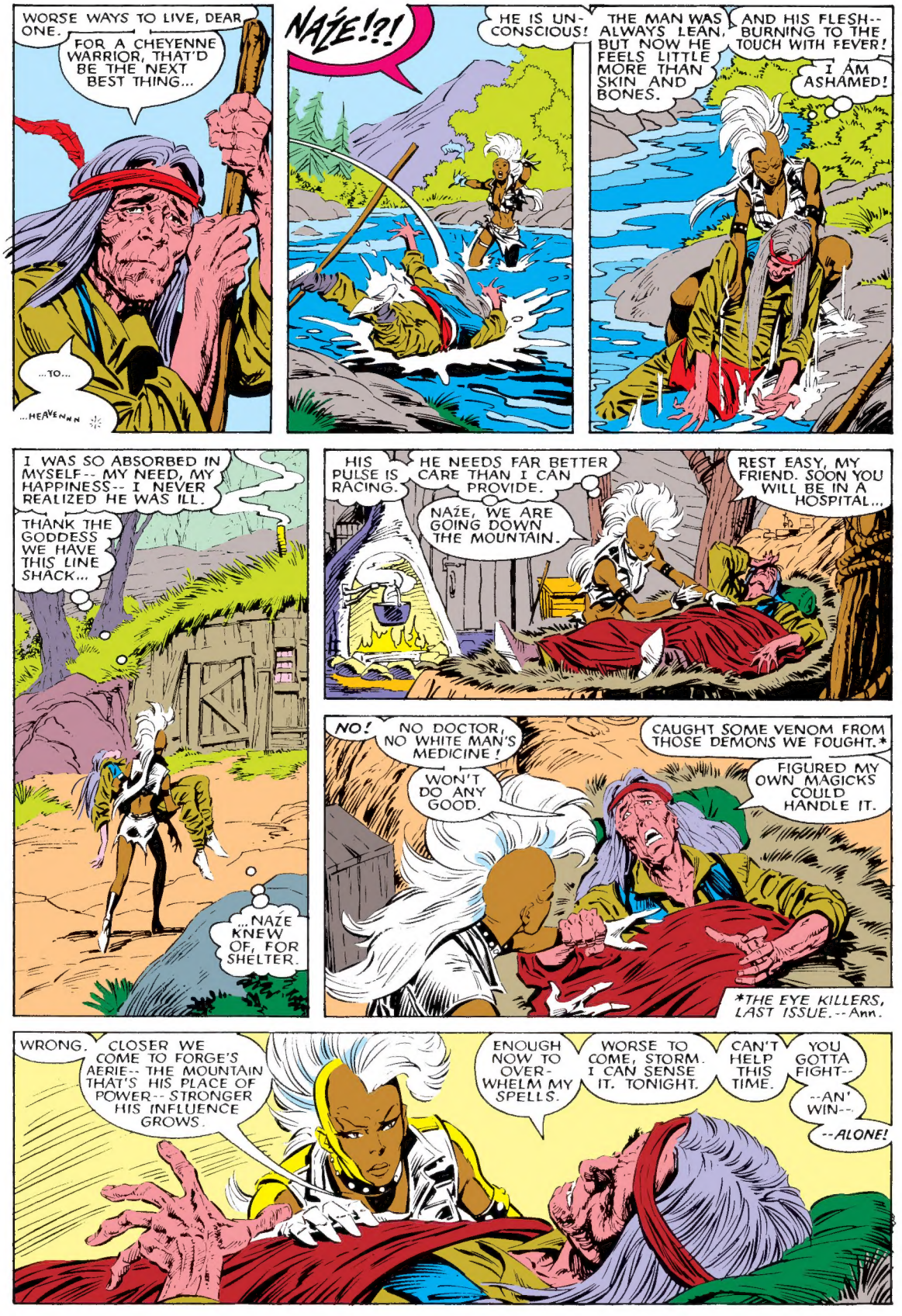
IRENIE?!?
WHAT'S WRONG, OLD FRIEND?!
DARKNESS MADNESS
MAW TEETH TEARING
RAVENING ALL-CONSUMING NEVER SATISFIED NO LIGHT NO HOPE
SHATTERED BROKEN PLUNGING TUMBLING DYING
SO MUCH TOO MUCH LOSS CANNOT BEAR

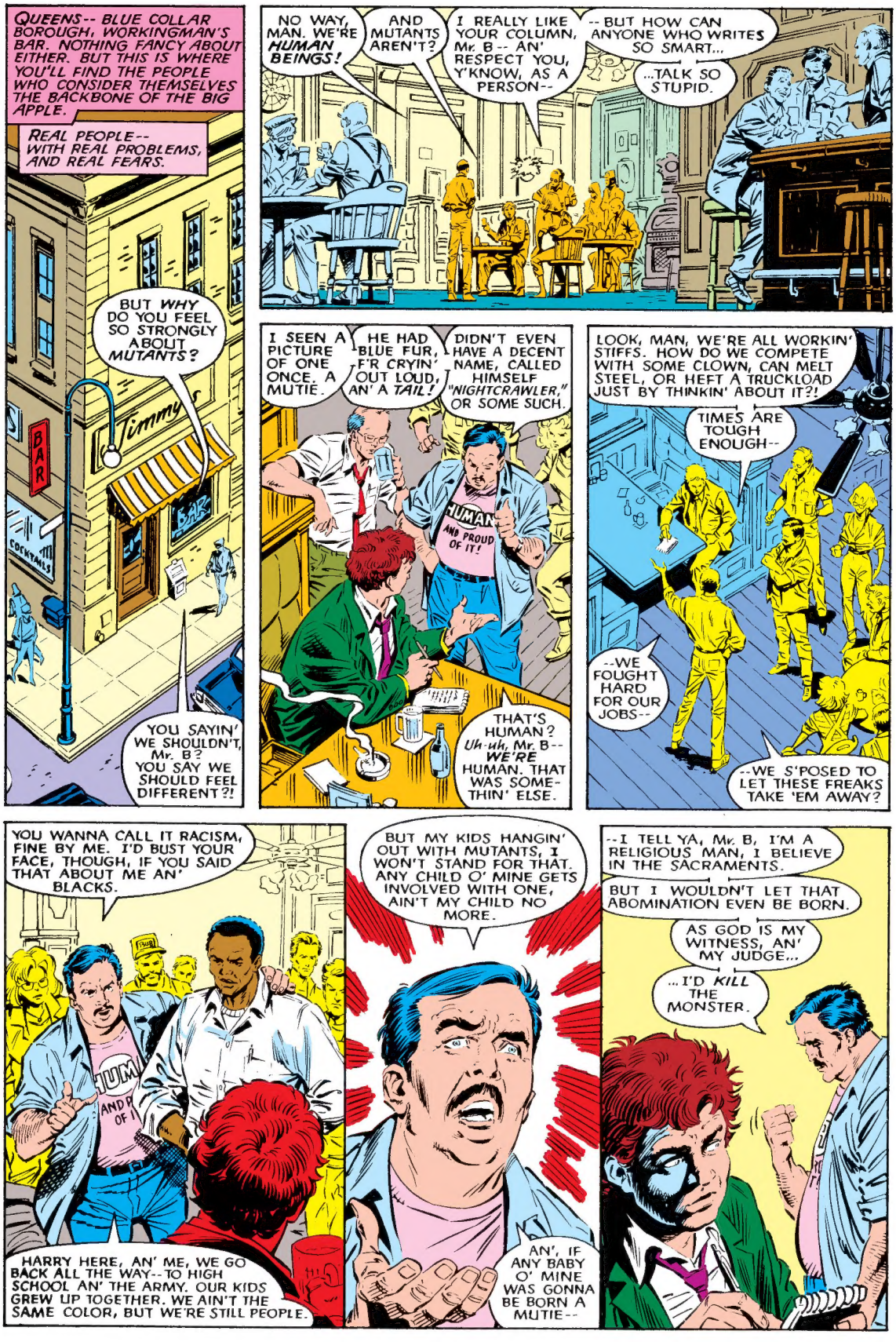

IT'S ALL RIGHT, DEAR HEART, YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
I'LL NEVER BE ALL RIGHT, MYSTIQUE; NOT THE WAY YOU MEAN.
AND NONE OF US ARE SAFE.

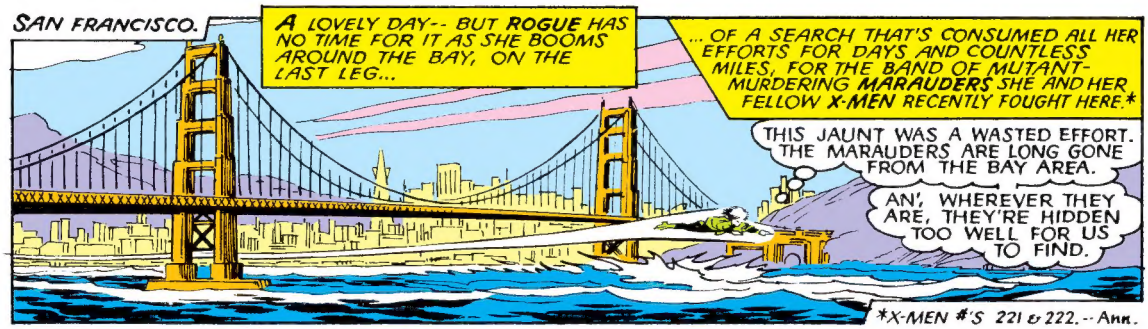

I WAS USING MY PRECOGNITIVE TALENT TO CHECK ON OUR FOSTER DAUGHTER, ROGUE-- AS I DO FROM TIME TO TIME -- SEARCHING THE FUTURE FOR ANY SIGNIFICANT THREATS TO HER LIFE.
MYSTIQUE, I FOUND OBLIVION!


I SEARCHED EVERY CONCEIVABLE TIMESTREAM-- NOT MERELY FOR A TRACE OF ROGUE, BUT HER TEAMMATES AS WELL--
-- THE RESULT WAS THE SAME.
MYSTIQUE, SOMETIME VERY SOON...
...THE X-MEN ARE GOING TO DIE!


THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, ALONG THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, SOMEWHERE IN COLORADO...
THE WOMAN IS STORM, WHO ONCE RODE THE WINDS AND RULED THE WEATHER, AND STILL LEADS THE X-MEN.
HER COMPANION, NAŹE, IS A SHAMAN-- MEDICINE CHIEF-- OF THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE.
THE SAME REASON HAS BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER, AND ON THIS VISIONQUEST TO FIND HIM:
...FORGE.
THE MAN STORM LOVES-- WHOSE NEUTRALIZER STRIPPED HER OF HER MUTANT POWERS, WHO REMAINS HER ONLY HOPE FOR THEIR RESTORATION.
HE IS ALSO THE MAN WHO NAŹE CLAIMS IS TRYING TO BRING ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD.
FORGIVE ME, LITTLE FRIEND.
BUT OUR NEED FOR SUSTENANCE IS TOO GREAT.
NAŹE-- I HAVE HIM!
Whoops--?!?
SPLASH!
YOU SURE 'BOUT THAT, SWEET-HEART?
BEHOLD. DINNER.
YOU KNOW, I HAD FORGOTTEN SUCH SERENITY, SUCH PEACE-- SUCH BEAUTY--EXISTED. ESPECIALLY IN THIS LAND.
PART OF ME WISHES I COULD REMAIN HERE FOREVER.
YET, IN MY HEART, I KNOW I CANNOT.
PEACE FOR ME IS A RESPITE BETWEEN DESPERATE BATTLES, A TIME TO GATHER STRENGTH, TO RESTORE BOTH BODY AND SPIRIT BY REMINDING MYSELF OF WHAT I FIGHT FOR.

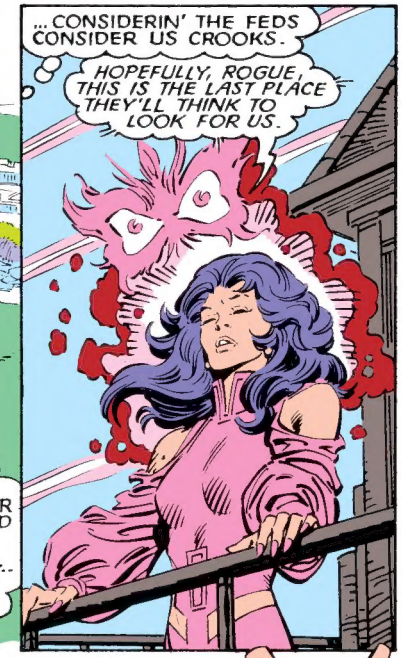

WORSE WAYS TO LIVE, DEAR ONE.
FOR A CHEYENNE WARRIOR, THAT'D BE THE NEXT BEST THING...
...TO...
...HEAVENNNN
NAŹE!?!
HE IS UN-CONSCIOUS!
THE MAN WAS ALWAYS LEAN, BUT NOW HE FEELS LITTLE MORE THAN SKIN AND BONES.
AND HIS FLESH-- BURNING TO THE TOUCH WITH FEVER!
I AM ASHAMED!
I WAS SO ABSORBED IN MYSELF-- MY NEED, MY HAPPINESS-- I NEVER REALIZED HE WAS ILL.
THANK THE GODDESS WE HAVE THIS LINE SHACK...
...NAŹE KNEW OF, FOR SHELTER.
HIS PULSE IS RACING.
HE NEEDS FAR BETTER CARE THAN I CAN PROVIDE.
NAŹE, WE ARE GOING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.
REST EASY, MY FRIEND. SOON YOU WILL BE IN A HOSPITAL...
NO!
NO DOCTOR, NO WHITE MAN'S MEDICINE!
WON'T DO ANY GOOD.
CAUGHT SOME VENOM FROM THOSE DEMONS WE FOUGHT.*
FIGURED MY OWN MAGICKS COULD HANDLE IT.
*THE EYE KILLERS, LAST ISSUE.--Ann.
WRONG.
CLOSER WE COME TO FORGE'S AERIE-- THE MOUNTAIN THAT'S HIS PLACE OF POWER-- STRONGER HIS INFLUENCE GROWS.
ENOUGH NOW TO OVER-WHELM MY SPELLS.
WORSE TO COME, STORM. I CAN SENSE IT. TONIGHT.
CAN'T HELP THIS TIME.
YOU GOTTA FIGHT--
--AN' WIN--
--ALONE!


QUEENS-- BLUE COLLAR BOROUGH, WORKINGMAN'S BAR. NOTHING FANCY ABOUT EITHER. BUT THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL FIND THE PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES THE BACKBONE OF THE BIG APPLE.
REAL PEOPLE-- WITH REAL PROBLEMS, AND REAL FEARS.
BUT WHY DO YOU FEEL SO STRONGLY ABOUT MUTANTS?
Jimmy's
BAR
BAR
COCKTAILS
YOU SAYIN' WE SHOULDN'T, Mr. B? YOU SAY WE SHOULD FEEL DIFFERENT?!
NO WAY, MAN. WE'RE HUMAN BEINGS!
AND MUTANTS AREN'T?
I REALLY LIKE YOUR COLUMN, Mr. B-- AN' RESPECT YOU, Y'KNOW, AS A PERSON--
--BUT HOW CAN ANYONE WHO WRITES SO SMART...
...TALK SO STUPID.
I SEEN A PICTURE OF ONE ONCE. A MUTIE.
HE HAD BLUE FUR, F'R CRYIN' OUT LOUD, AN' A TAIL!
DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A DECENT NAME, CALLED HIMSELF "NIGHTCRAWLER," OR SOME SUCH.
HUMAN AND PROUD OF IT!
THAT'S HUMAN? Uh-uh, Mr. B-- WE'RE HUMAN. THAT WAS SOMETHIN' ELSE.
LOOK, MAN, WE'RE ALL WORKIN' STIFFS. HOW DO WE COMPETE WITH SOME CLOWN, CAN MELT STEEL, OR HEFT A TRUCKLOAD JUST BY THINKIN' ABOUT IT?!
TIMES ARE TOUGH ENOUGH--
--WE FOUGHT HARD FOR OUR JOBS--
--WE S'POSED TO LET THESE FREAKS TAKE 'EM AWAY?
YOU WANNA CALL IT RACISM, FINE BY ME. I'D BUST YOUR FACE, THOUGH, IF YOU SAID THAT ABOUT ME AN' BLACKS.
HARRY HERE, AN' ME, WE GO BACK ALL THE WAY--TO HIGH SCHOOL AN' THE ARMY. OUR KIDS GREW UP TOGETHER. WE AIN'T THE SAME COLOR, BUT WE'RE STILL PEOPLE.
BUT MY KIDS HANGIN' OUT WITH MUTANTS, I WON'T STAND FOR THAT. ANY CHILD O' MINE GETS INVOLVED WITH ONE, AIN'T MY CHILD NO MORE.
AN', IF ANY BABY O' MINE WAS GONNA BE BORN A MUTIE--
--I TELL YA, Mr. B, I'M A RELIGIOUS MAN, I BELIEVE IN THE SACRAMENTS.
BUT I WOULDN'T LET THAT ABOMINATION EVEN BE BORN.
AS GOD IS MY WITNESS, AN' MY JUDGE...
...I'D KILL THE MONSTER.

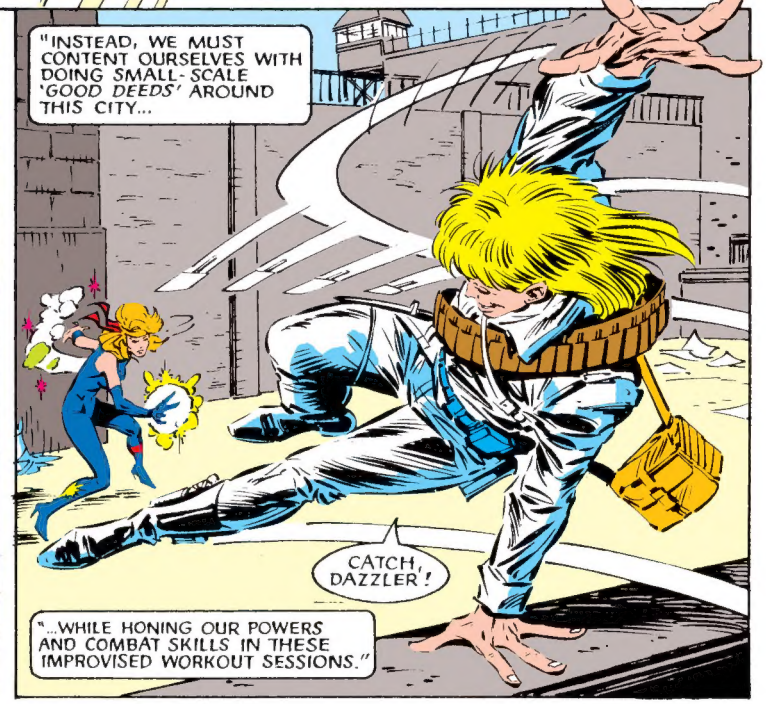

SAN FRANCISCO.
A LOVELY DAY-- BUT ROGUE HAS NO TIME FOR IT AS SHE BOOMS AROUND THE BAY, ON THE LAST LEG...
...OF A SEARCH THAT'S CONSUMED ALL HER EFFORTS FOR DAYS AND COUNTLESS MILES, FOR THE BAND OF MUTANT-MURDERING MARAUDERS SHE AND HER FELLOW X-MEN RECENTLY FOUGHT HERE.*
THIS JAUNT WAS A WASTED EFFORT. THE MARAUDERS ARE LONG GONE FROM THE BAY AREA.
AN', WHEREVER THEY ARE, THEY'RE HIDDEN TOO WELL FOR US TO FIND.
*X-MEN #'S 221 & 222.--Ann.

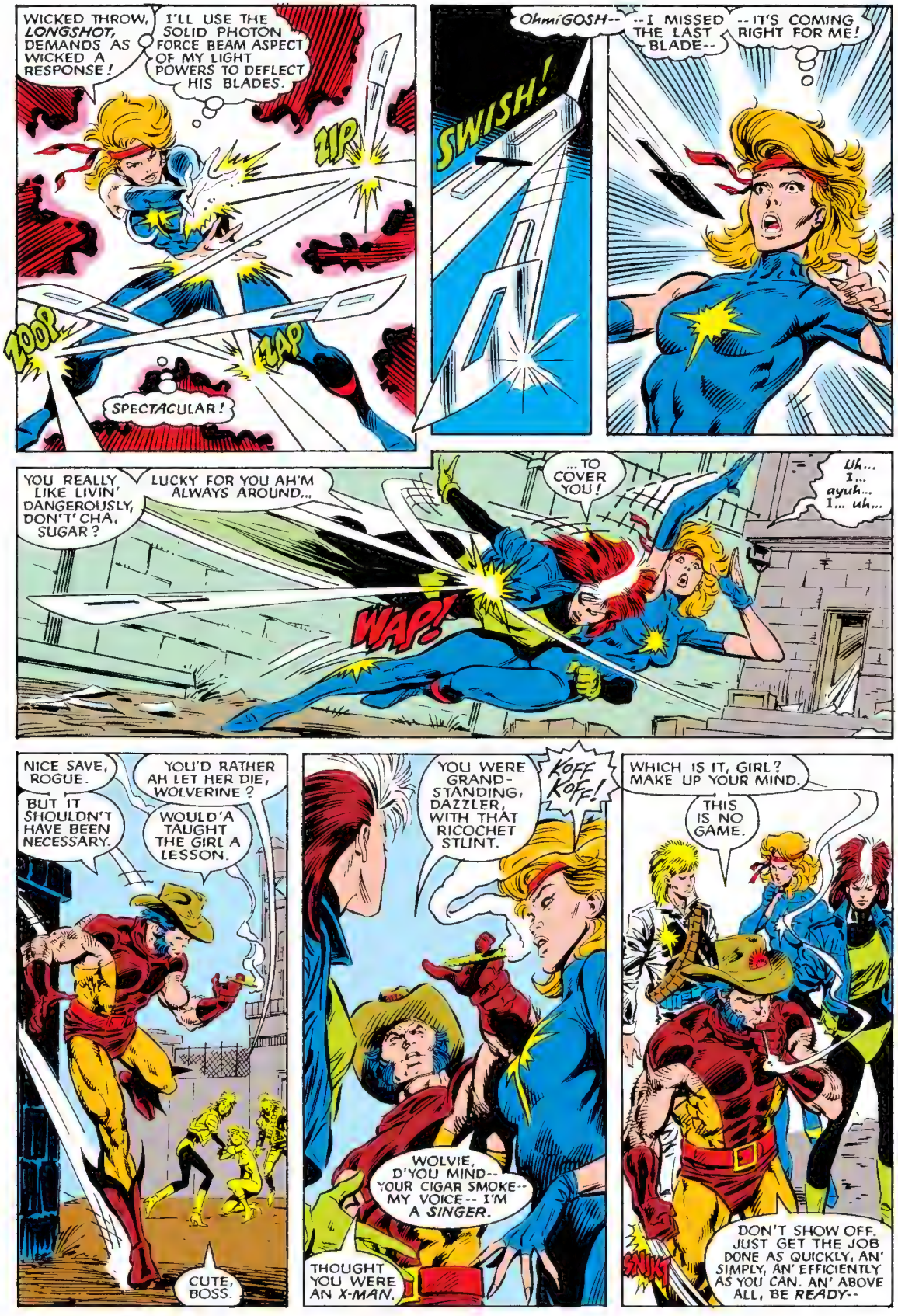
ON THE OTHER HAND, AH LOVE HANGIN' ABOUT THIS TOWN. AH'LL TAKE ANY EXCUSE TO STAY.
PEOPLE HERE DON'T SEEM TO MIND THE X-MEN'S PRESENCE--
--THEY CONSIDER US "HEROES"--
--EVEN THOUGH THAT SCRAP WITH THE MARAUDERS TRASHED A WHOLE BIG CHUNK O' DOWNTOWN.

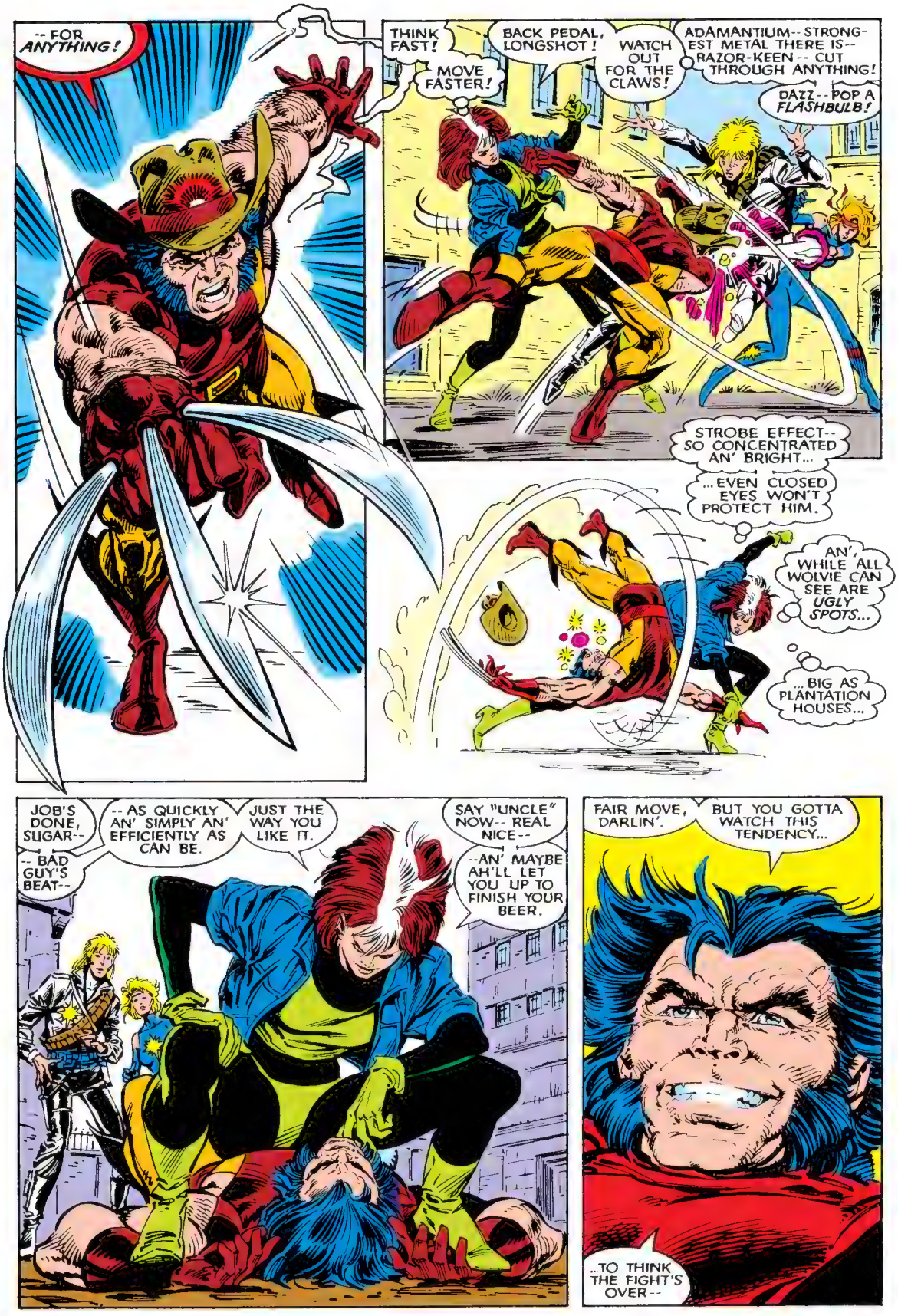
BEEN DOIN' OUR BEST TO CLEAN UP THAT MESS.
ALMOST "HOME," PSYLOCKE!
ZILCH TO REPORT, AS USUAL.
KIND'A FUNNY, Y'KNOW, OUR USIN' THE OLD FEDERAL PRISON-- ALCATRAZ-- AS OUR HIDEOUT.


...CONSIDERIN' THE FEDS CONSIDER US CROOKS.
HOPEFULLY, ROGUE, THIS IS THE LAST PLACE THEY'LL THINK TO LOOK FOR US.

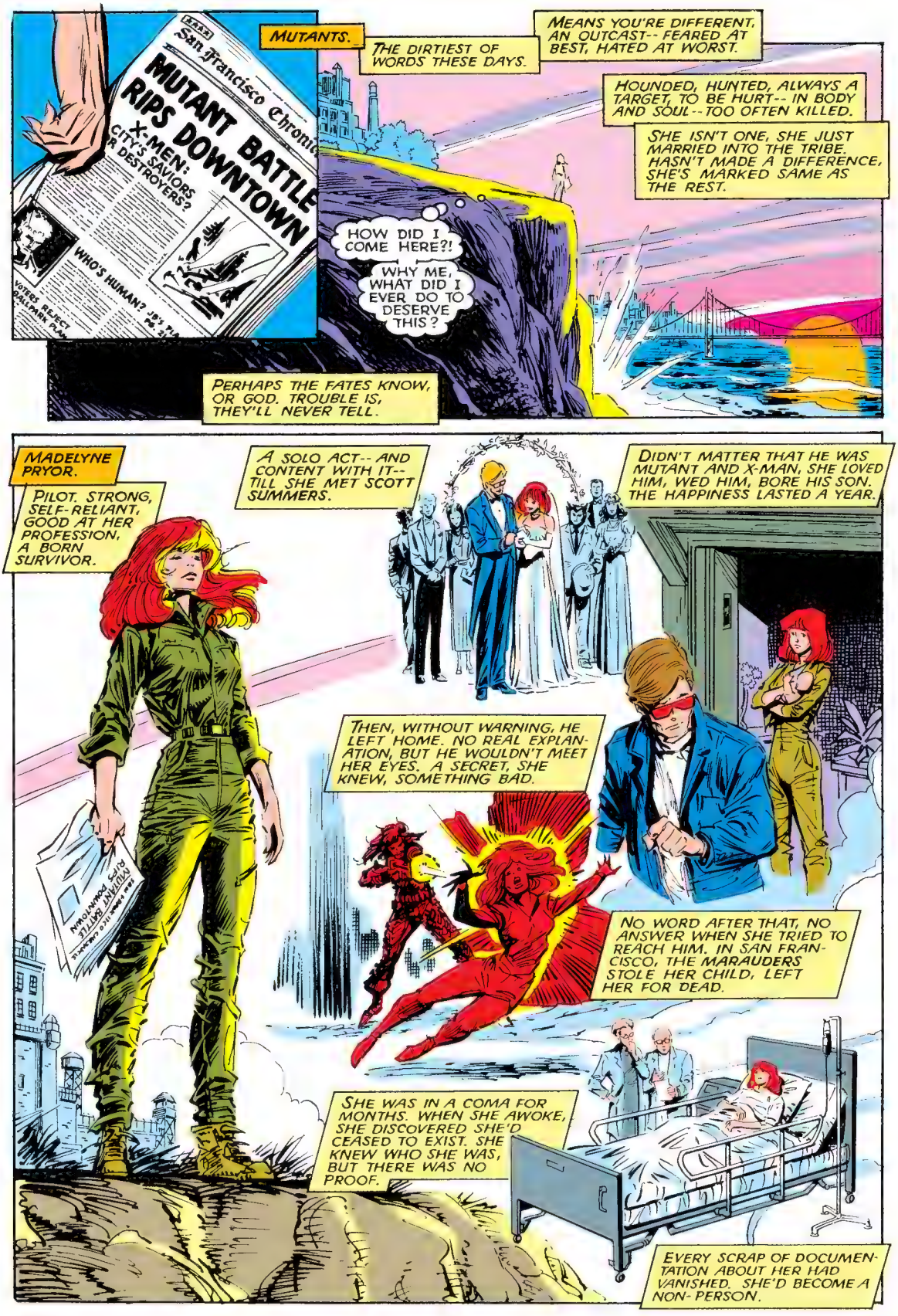
ROGUE'S THOUGHTS ARE THE HARDEST OF THE X-MEN FOR ME TO READ...
...BUT HER ANGER AND FRUSTRATION WERE PLAIN TO SEE.
WE ALL WANT TO STRIKE BACK...
...TO REPAY THE MARAUDERS FOR THE WOUNDS THEY'VE INFLICTED.


"INSTEAD, WE MUST CONTENT OURSELVES WITH DOING SMALL-SCALE 'GOOD DEEDS' AROUND THIS CITY...
CATCH, DAZZLER!
"...WHILE HONING OUR POWERS AND COMBAT SKILLS IN THESE IMPROVISED WORKOUT SESSIONS."

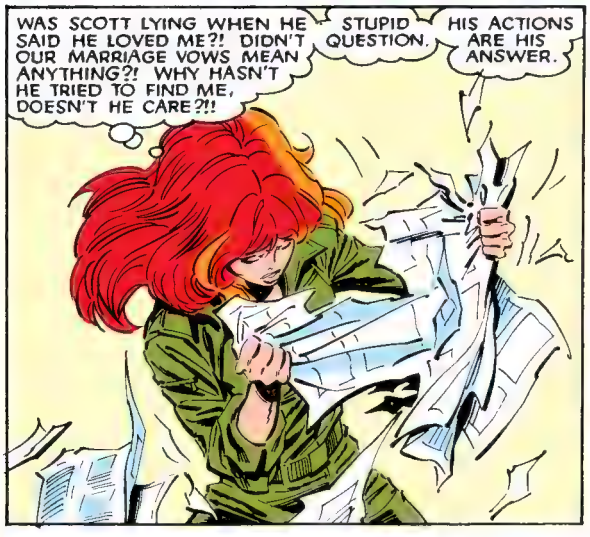

WICKED THROW, LONGSHOT, DEMANDS AS WICKED A RESPONSE!
I'LL USE THE SOLID PHOTON FORCE BEAM ASPECT OF MY LIGHT POWERS TO DEFLECT HIS BLADES.
ZIP
ZOOP
ZAP
SPECTACULAR!
OhmiGOSH--
SWISH!
--I MISSED THE LAST BLADE--
--IT'S COMING RIGHT FOR ME!
YOU REALLY LIKE LIVIN' DANGEROUSLY, DON'T' CHA, SUGAR?
LUCKY FOR YOU AH'M ALWAYS AROUND...
... TO COVER YOU!
Uh... I... ayuh... I... uh...
WAP!
NICE SAVE, ROGUE.
BUT IT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN NECESSARY.
YOU'D RATHER AH LET HER DIE, WOLVERINE?
WOULD'A TAUGHT THE GIRL A LESSON.
CUTE, BOSS.
YOU WERE GRAND-STANDING, DAZZLER, WITH THAT RICOCHET STUNT.
KOFF KOFF!
WOLVIE, D'YOU MIND-- YOUR CIGAR SMOKE-- MY VOICE-- I'M A SINGER.
THOUGHT YOU WERE AN X-MAN.
WHICH IS IT, GIRL? MAKE UP YOUR MIND.
THIS IS NO GAME.
SNIKT
DON'T SHOW OFF. JUST GET THE JOB DONE AS QUICKLY, AN' SIMPLY, AN' EFFICIENTLY AS YOU CAN. AN' ABOVE ALL, BE READY--

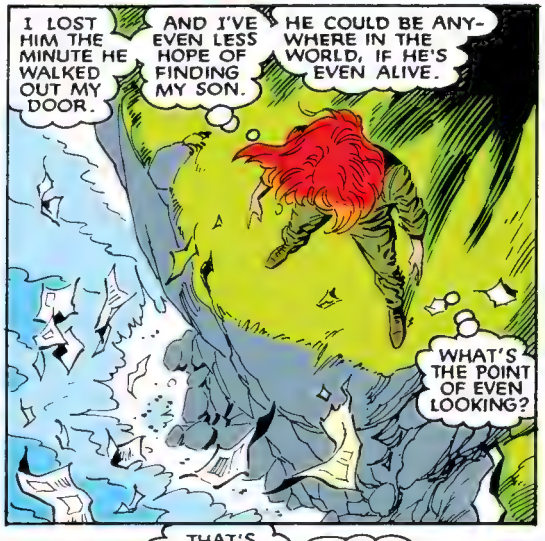

-- FOR ANYTHING!
THINK FAST!
MOVE FASTER!
BACK PEDAL, LONGSHOT!
WATCH OUT FOR THE CLAWS!
ADAMANTIUM-- STRONGEST METAL THERE IS-- RAZOR-KEEN -- CUT THROUGH ANYTHING!
DAZZ-- POP A FLASHBULB!
STROBE EFFECT-- SO CONCENTRATED AN' BRIGHT...
...EVEN CLOSED EYES WON'T PROTECT HIM.
AN', WHILE ALL WOLVIE CAN SEE ARE UGLY SPOTS...
...BIG AS PLANTATION HOUSES...
JOB'S DONE, SUGAR--
-- BAD GUY'S BEAT--
-- AS QUICKLY AN' SIMPLY AN' EFFICIENTLY AS CAN BE.
JUST THE WAY YOU LIKE IT.
SAY "UNCLE" NOW-- REAL NICE--
--AN' MAYBE AH'LL LET YOU UP TO FINISH YOUR BEER.
FAIR MOVE, DARLIN'.
BUT YOU GOTTA WATCH THIS TENDENCY...
...TO THINK THE FIGHT'S OVER--

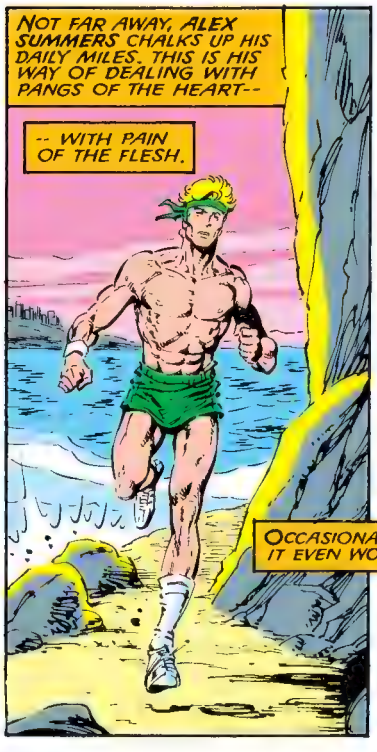
--WHEN IT'S ONLY JUST BEGUN!
HEY!?!
YOUR TURN.
SMOMPH!
UNLESS YOU WANT TO TEST WHETHER YOUR PARTIAL INVULNERABILITY IS A MATCH FOR MY CLAWS?
UNCLE.
DARN IT.
FIGURED AH HAD YOU THIS TIME.
YUP.
CONFIDENCE IS FINE, ACTIN' COCKY'LL COST YOU.
DON'T FORGET, I'VE BEEN SCRAPPIN' LONGER'N YOU'VE BEEN ALIVE. YOU GOT A WAYS TO TRAVEL, GIRL, BEFORE YOU'RE EVEN CLOSE TO ME.
BUT YOU'RE LISTENING, ROGUE, YOU'RE LEARNING.
THERE'S HOPE FOR YOU YET.
WELL, HUSH MAH MOUTH! A COMPLIMENT AND A BREW! WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE?
DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK, KID.
ANY JOY ON TODAY'S SEARCH?
NOPE.
THAT'LL CHANGE. SOONER OR LATER, WE AN' THE MARAUDERS'LL SCRAP AGAIN.
SPAT!
CAN'T WAIT. WE OWE THOSE MURDERIN' BUTCHERS FOR THE HURTS THEY'VE DONE US.
SPEAKIN' O' HURTS, HOW'RE HAVOK AN' Ms. PRYOR DOIN'?
HOW DO YOU EXPECT? FOR THEM, IT'S AS THOUGH THEIR HEARTS HAVE BEEN TORN OUT--MAYBE FOREVER!

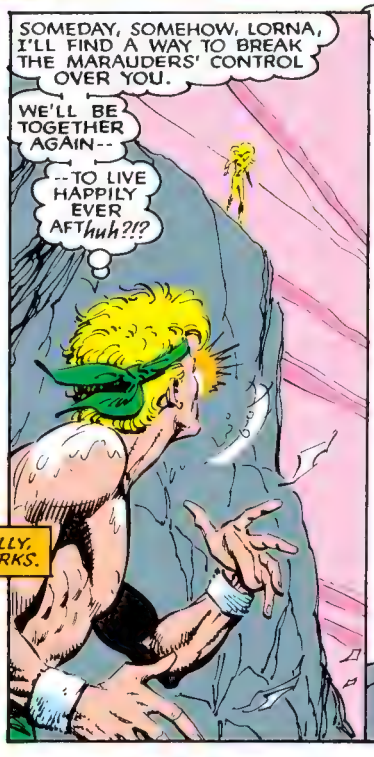

MUTANTS.
THE DIRTIEST OF WORDS THESE DAYS.
MEANS YOU'RE DIFFERENT, AN OUTCAST-- FEARED AT BEST, HATED AT WORST.
HOUNDED, HUNTED, ALWAYS A TARGET, TO BE HURT-- IN BODY AND SOUL--TOO OFTEN KILLED.
SHE ISN'T ONE, SHE JUST MARRIED INTO THE TRIBE. HASN'T MADE A DIFFERENCE, SHE'S MARKED SAME AS THE REST.
San Francisco Chronicle
MUTANT BATTLE RIPS DOWNTOWN
X-MEN: CITY'S SAVIORS OR DESTROYERS?
WHO'S HUMAN?
VOTERS REJECT BALLPARK PLAN
HOW DID I COME HERE?!
WHY ME, WHAT DID I EVER DO TO DESERVE THIS?
PERHAPS THE FATES KNOW, OR GOD. TROUBLE IS, THEY'LL NEVER TELL.
MADELYNE PRYOR.
PILOT. STRONG, SELF-RELIANT, GOOD AT HER PROFESSION, A BORN SURVIVOR.
A SOLO ACT-- AND CONTENT WITH IT-- TILL SHE MET SCOTT SUMMERS.
DIDN'T MATTER THAT HE WAS MUTANT AND X-MAN, SHE LOVED HIM, WED HIM, BORE HIS SON. THE HAPPINESS LASTED A YEAR.
THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, HE LEFT HOME. NO REAL EXPLANATION, BUT HE WOULDN'T MEET HER EYES. A SECRET, SHE KNEW, SOMETHING BAD.
NO WORD AFTER THAT, NO ANSWER WHEN SHE TRIED TO REACH HIM. IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE MARAUDERS STOLE HER CHILD, LEFT HER FOR DEAD.
SHE WAS IN A COMA FOR MONTHS. WHEN SHE AWOKE, SHE DISCOVERED SHE'D CEASED TO EXIST. SHE KNEW WHO SHE WAS, BUT THERE WAS NO PROOF.
EVERY SCRAP OF DOCUMENTATION ABOUT HER HAD VANISHED. SHE'D BECOME A NON-PERSON.

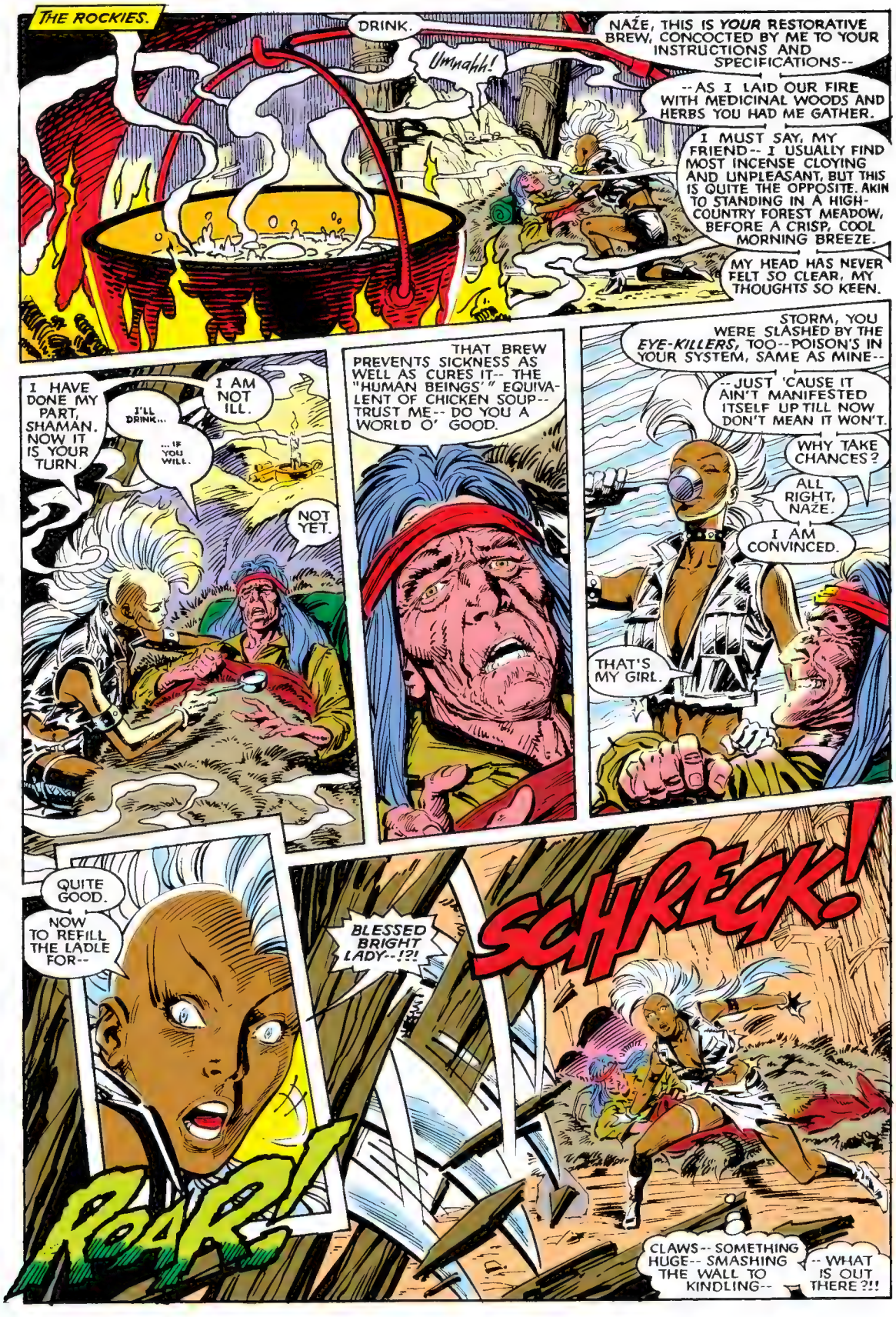
*X-MEN #'s 221 & 222 -- AnnN.

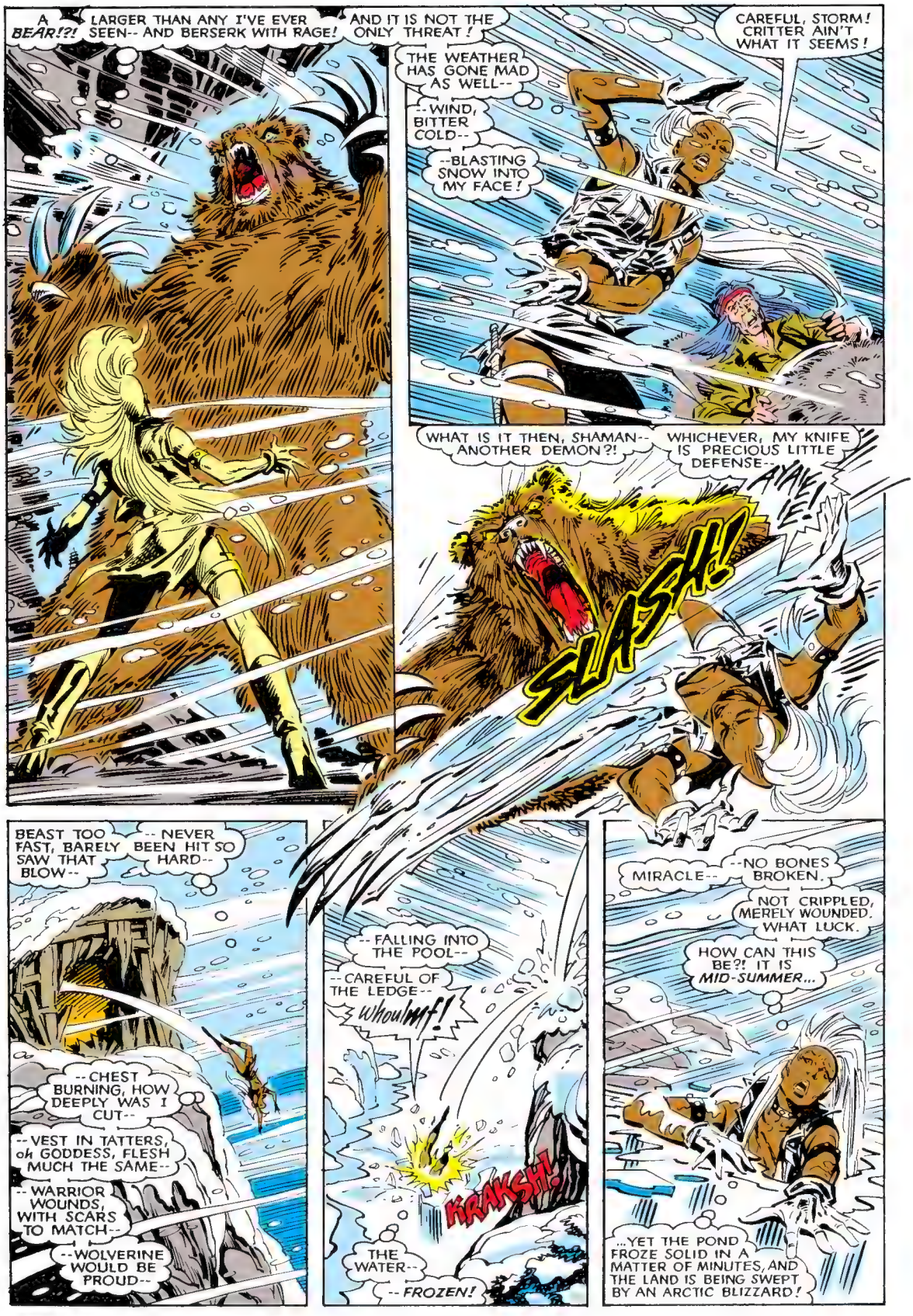


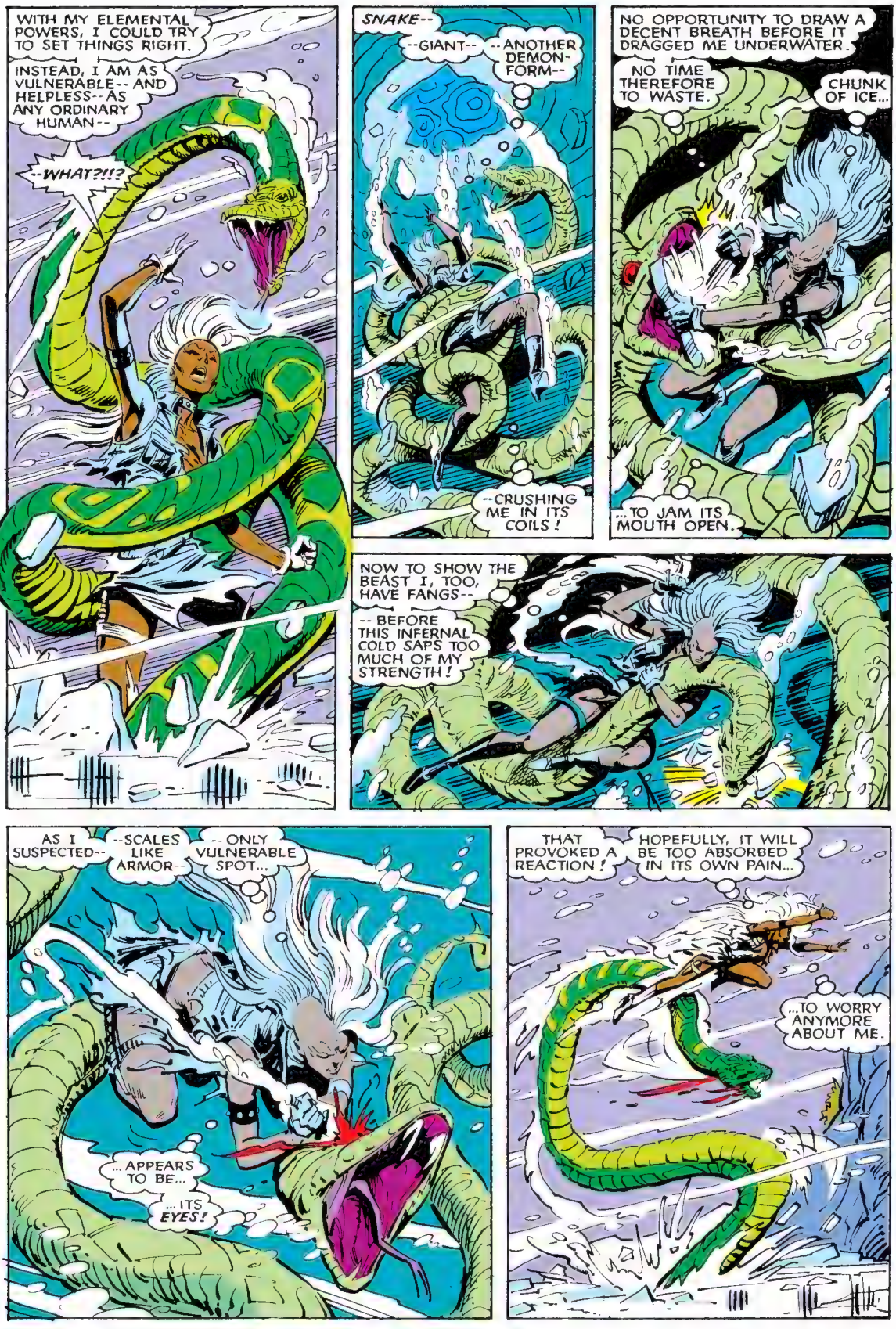


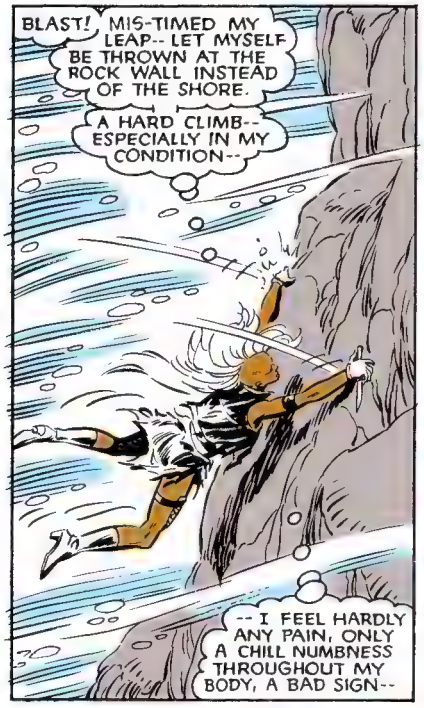





THE ROCKIES.
DRINK.
Umnahh!
NAŹE, THIS IS YOUR RESTORATIVE BREW, CONCOCTED BY ME TO YOUR INSTRUCTIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS--
--AS I LAID OUR FIRE WITH MEDICINAL WOODS AND HERBS YOU HAD ME GATHER.
I MUST SAY, MY FRIEND-- I USUALLY FIND MOST INCENSE CLOYING AND UNPLEASANT, BUT THIS IS QUITE THE OPPOSITE. AKIN TO STANDING IN A HIGH-COUNTRY FOREST MEADOW, BEFORE A CRISP, COOL MORNING BREEZE.
MY HEAD HAS NEVER FELT SO CLEAR, MY THOUGHTS SO KEEN.
I HAVE DONE MY PART, SHAMAN. NOW IT IS YOUR TURN.
I'LL DRINK...
... IF YOU WILL.
I AM NOT ILL.
NOT YET.
THAT BREW PREVENTS SICKNESS AS WELL AS CURES IT-- THE "HUMAN BEINGS'" EQUIVALENT OF CHICKEN SOUP-- TRUST ME-- DO YOU A WORLD O' GOOD.
STORM, YOU WERE SLASHED BY THE EYE-KILLERS, TOO--POISON'S IN YOUR SYSTEM, SAME AS MINE--
--JUST 'CAUSE IT AIN'T MANIFESTED ITSELF UP TILL NOW DON'T MEAN IT WON'T.
WHY TAKE CHANCES?
ALL RIGHT, NAŹE.
I AM CONVINCED.
THAT'S MY GIRL.
QUITE GOOD.
NOW TO REFILL THE LADLE FOR--
BLESSED BRIGHT LADY--!?!
SCHRECK!
ROAR!
CLAWS-- SOMETHING HUGE-- SMASHING THE WALL TO KINDLING--
-- WHAT IS OUT THERE?!!

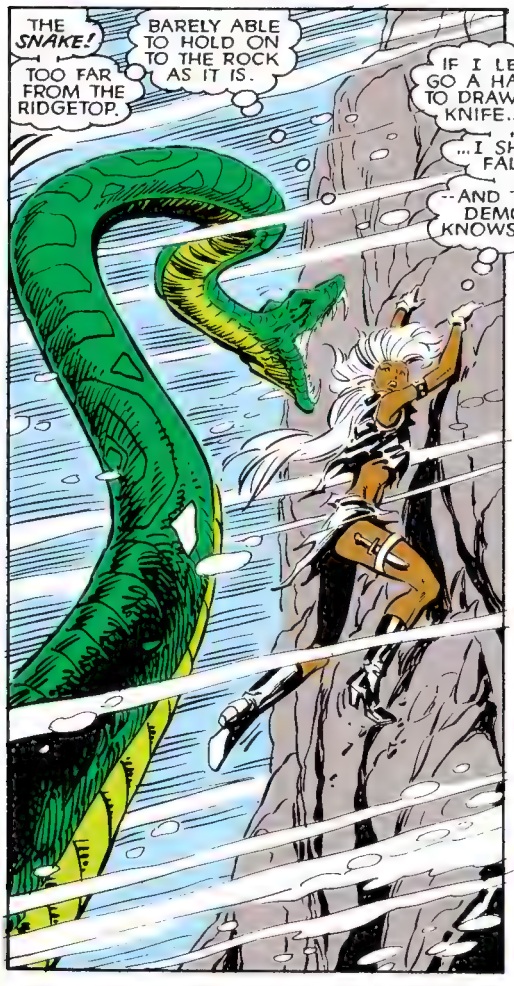

A BEAR!?!
LARGER THAN ANY I'VE EVER SEEN-- AND BERSERK WITH RAGE!
AND IT IS NOT THE ONLY THREAT!
CAREFUL, STORM! CRITTER AIN'T WHAT IT SEEMS!
THE WEATHER HAS GONE MAD AS WELL--
--WIND, BITTER COLD--
--BLASTING SNOW INTO MY FACE!
WHAT IS IT THEN, SHAMAN-- ANOTHER DEMON?!
WHICHEVER, MY KNIFE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE DEFENSE--
AYAIEE!
SLASH!
BEAST TOO FAST, BARELY SAW THAT BLOW--
-- NEVER BEEN HIT SO HARD--
--CHEST BURNING, HOW DEEPLY WAS I CUT--
--VEST IN TATTERS, oh GODDESS, FLESH MUCH THE SAME--
--WARRIOR WOUNDS, WITH SCARS TO MATCH--
--WOLVERINE WOULD BE PROUD--
-- FALLING INTO THE POOL--
--CAREFUL OF THE LEDGE--
whoulmf!
KRAKSH!
THE WATER--
-- FROZEN!
MIRACLE--
--NO BONES BROKEN.
NOT CRIPPLED, MERELY WOUNDED. WHAT LUCK.
HOW CAN THIS BE?! IT IS MID-SUMMER...
...YET THE POND FROZE SOLID IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, AND THE LAND IS BEING SWEPT BY AN ARCTIC BLIZZARD!

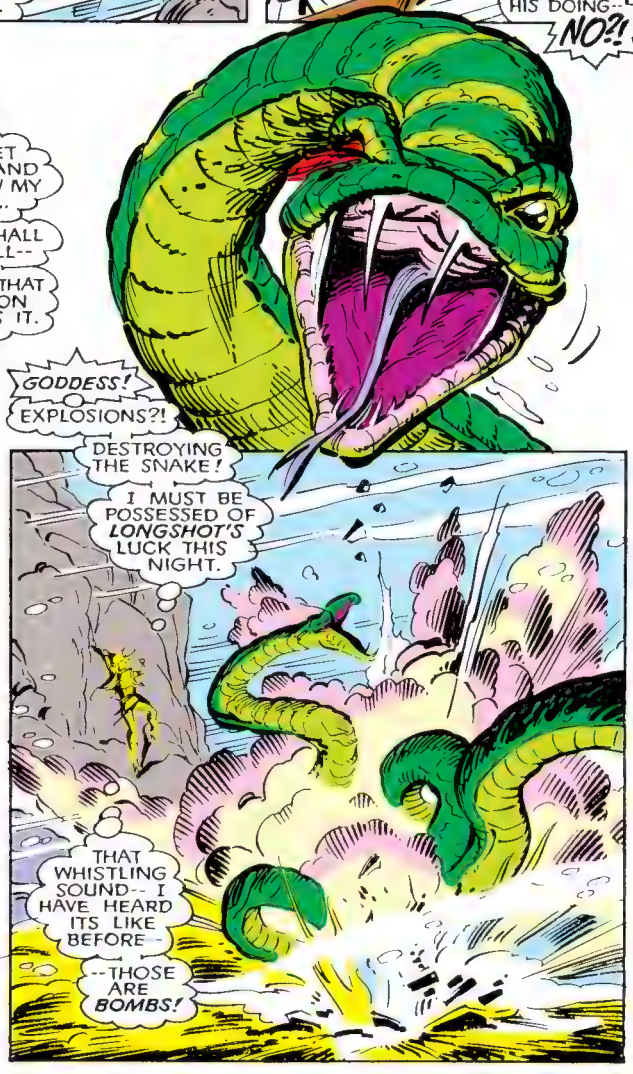

WITH MY ELEMENTAL POWERS, I COULD TRY TO SET THINGS RIGHT.
INSTEAD, I AM AS VULNERABLE-- AND HELPLESS-- AS ANY ORDINARY HUMAN--
--WHAT?!!?
SNAKE--
--GIANT--
--ANOTHER DEMON-FORM--
--CRUSHING ME IN ITS COILS!
NO OPPORTUNITY TO DRAW A DECENT BREATH BEFORE IT DRAGGED ME UNDERWATER.
NO TIME THEREFORE TO WASTE.
CHUNK OF ICE...
...TO JAM ITS MOUTH OPEN.
NOW TO SHOW THE BEAST I, TOO, HAVE FANGS--
-- BEFORE THIS INFERNAL COLD SAPS TOO MUCH OF MY STRENGTH!
AS I SUSPECTED--
--SCALES LIKE ARMOR--
-- ONLY VULNERABLE SPOT...
...APPEARS TO BE...
...ITS EYES!
THAT PROVOKED A REACTION!
HOPEFULLY, IT WILL BE TOO ABSORBED IN ITS OWN PAIN...
...TO WORRY ANYMORE ABOUT ME.


BLAST! MIS-TIMED MY LEAP-- LET MYSELF BE THROWN AT THE ROCK WALL INSTEAD OF THE SHORE.
A HARD CLIMB-- ESPECIALLY IN MY CONDITION--
--I FEEL HARDLY ANY PAIN, ONLY A CHILL NUMBNESS THROUGHOUT MY BODY, A BAD SIGN--

--BUT THIS IS A SHORTER, QUICKER WAY BACK TO NAZE.
THAT CRY-- AN EAGLE--
--ABOVE ME--
--HIDDEN IN THE SNOW.

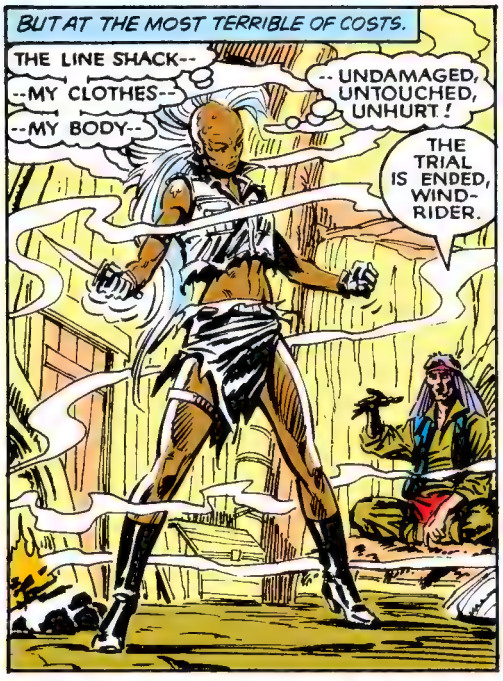
THE EAGLE IS FORGE'S SIGN.
NAZE SAID WE WERE NEARING HIS MOUNTAIN OF POWER.
HAS HE COME TO US?!
IS THIS MADNESS HIS DOING--
NO?!


THE SNAKE!
TOO FAR FROM THE RIDGETOP.
BARELY ABLE TO HOLD ON TO THE ROCK AS IT IS.
IF I LET GO A HAND TO DRAW MY KNIFE...
...I SHALL FALL--
--AND THAT DEMON KNOWS IT.


GODDESS!
EXPLOSIONS?!
DESTROYING THE SNAKE!
I MUST BE POSSESSED OF LONGSHOT'S LUCK THIS NIGHT.
THAT WHISTLING SOUND-- I HAVE HEARD ITS LIKE BEFORE--
--THOSE ARE BOMBS!

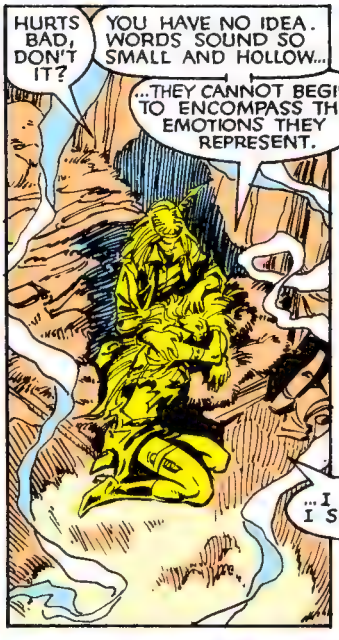
THIS MOUNTAIN FOREST-- HAS BECOME TROPICAL JUNGLE-- A WARZONE-- VIETNAM!
I FEEL ITS STEAMING HEAT-- YET THE BLIZZARD STILL RAGES!
SOMEHOW, THE TWO REALITIES OVERLAP!
THOSE DEMONS-- I SAW THEM MONTHS AGO, AS PART OF A HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY IN FORGE'S PENTHOUSE!*
I WONDERED THEN IF THEY WERE FANTASY-- OR SOME NIGHT-MARE FROM FORGE'S PAST?
NOW, I KNOW.
HE MUST HAVE CONJURED THE CREATURES TO SLAUGHTER HIS ENEMIES.
*IN X-MEN #186... AND AGAIN IN #220-- AnnN.
IT WAS A WAR--EVIDENTLY, SOME DESPERATE BATTLE-- PERHAPS HE BELIEVED HE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE.
BUT-- HOWEVER NOBLE HIS MOTIVES-- THEY ARE FOREVER TAINTED BY THE FOUL MEANS HE USED.
AS, I FEAR, IS THE MAN'S SOUL.
THERE HE IS--
--FORGE!
IN THE GODDESS'S NAME--
--WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
ENJOYING MYSELF, SWEETHEART.
IS THAT A CRIME?
WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING POWER...
...IF IT'S NEVER USED?
I'M THE "MAKER," REMEMBER?
BUT INSTEAD OF BUILDING TOYS--
--LIKE MY PROSTHETIC HAND--
--I PLAN TO RESHAPE CREATION!
WANNA HELP?

I NEED YOU, BABE, SO I CAN FINISH WHAT WAS STARTED IN THE 'NAM.
I'M INCOMPLETE WITHOUT YOU.
C'MON, TAKE YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE BY MY SIDE.
NEVER!
STUPID COW--
--AS IF YOU HAD A CHOICE.
MY HAND--?!!
SEE? YOUR SOUL ACCEPTS-- GLADLY, GLORIOUSLY--
-- WHAT YOUR MIND DENIES.
WE ARE ONE!
I AM BOUND--
--TO NO ONE!
BUT EVEN AS THE LIGHT FADES FROM THE MAN'S EYES...
...ANOTHER, BRIGHTER RADIANCE FADES FROM HER HEART.
WHAT ORORO JUST DID...
...SHE KNOWS HAD TO BE DONE.

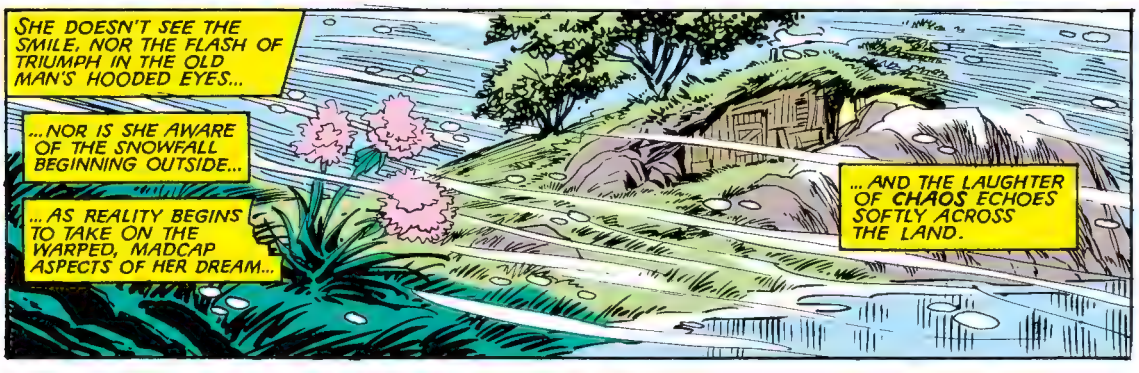

BUT AT THE MOST TERRIBLE OF COSTS.
THE LINE SHACK--
--MY CLOTHES--
--MY BODY--
-- UNDAMAGED, UNTOUCHED, UNHURT!
THE TRIAL IS ENDED, WIND-RIDER.

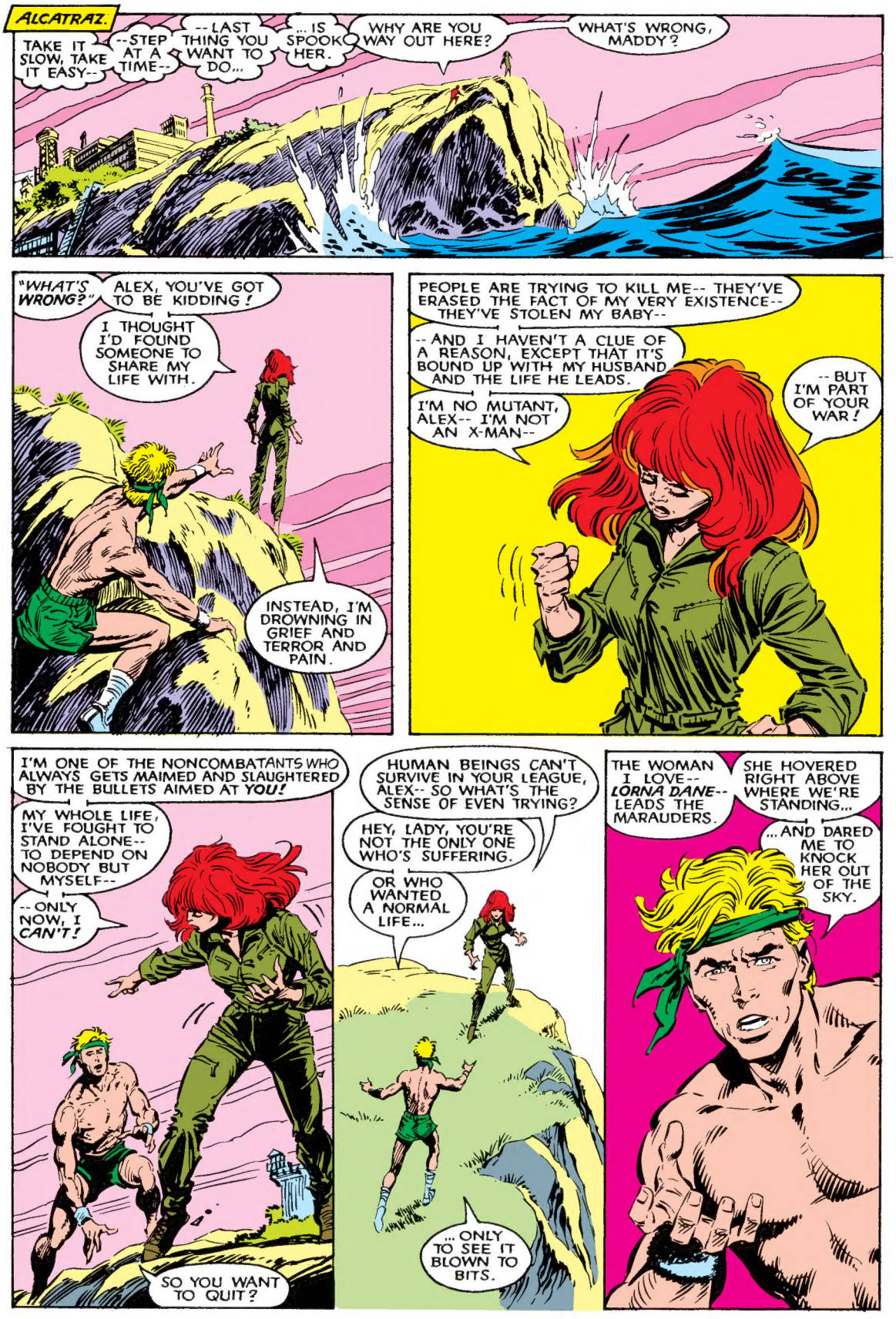
BREATHE EASILY. YOU ARE SAFE.
NOTHING HAPPENED. IT WAS ONLY A DREAM.
HARDLY. YOU FORGET, CHILD, DREAMS ARE BUT REALITY CAST IN A DIFFERENT FORM.
WHAT YOU ENDURED HAD A SUBSTANCE-- AND MEANING-- ALL ITS OWN.
I NEVER IMAGINED FORGE CAPABLE OF SUCH TERROR.

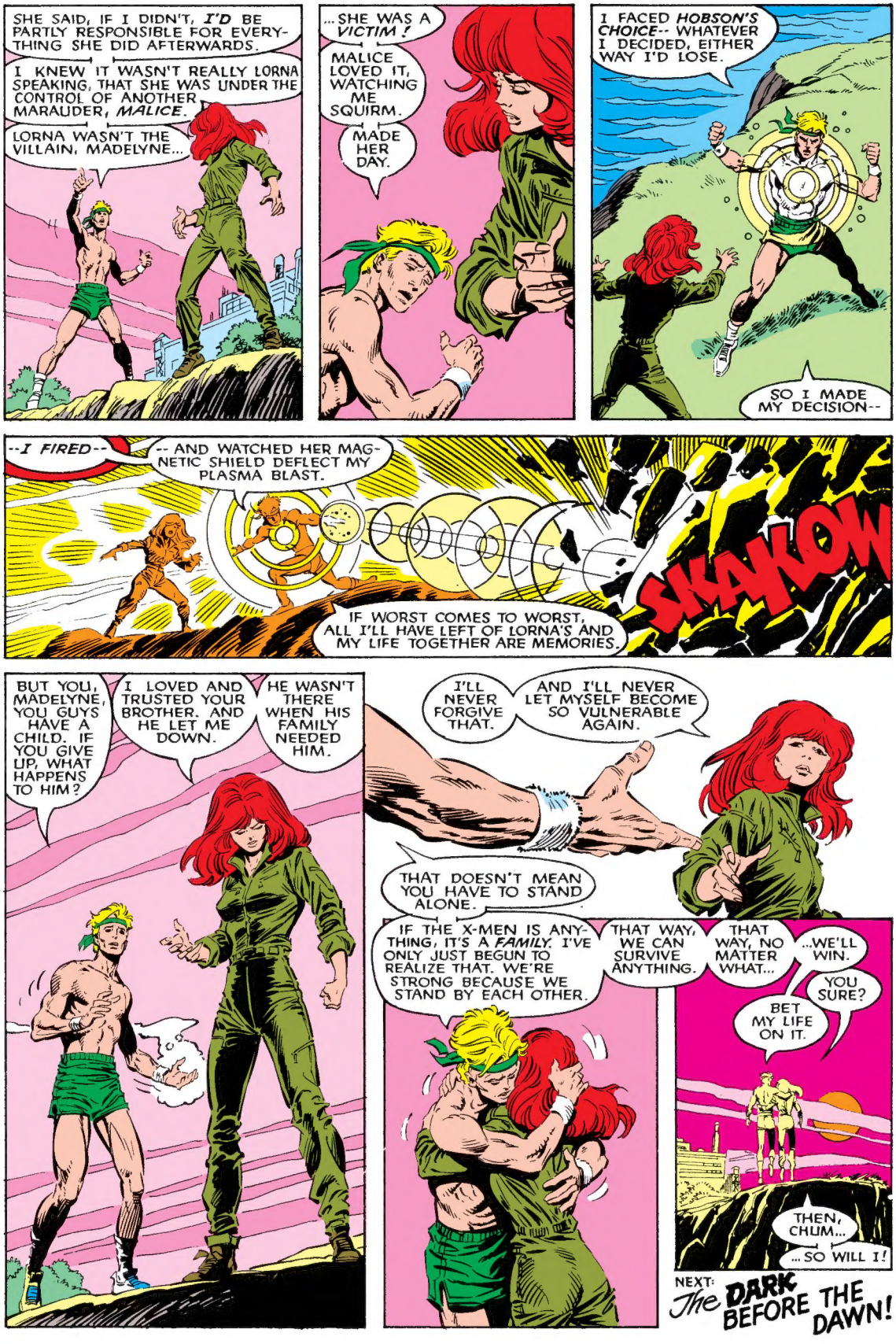
NAŹE, HE THREW WIDE THE GATE OF CHAOS AND LAUGHED TO BEHOLD OUR WORLD CONSUMED.
HE REMAINED THE "MAKER"--
--ONLY THIS TIME, OF TRANSCENDENT EVIL.
WAS AFRAID OF THAT.


HURTS BAD, DON'T IT?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA. WORDS SOUND SO SMALL AND HOLLOW...
...THEY CANNOT BEGIN TO ENCOMPASS THE EMOTIONS THEY REPRESENT.
...I MUST-- I SHALL--
--DESTROY HIM.

I LOVE FORGE, NAŹE...
...BUT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE IS DOING...
...WHAT HE HAS BECOME...


SHE DOESN'T SEE THE SMILE, NOR THE FLASH OF TRIUMPH IN THE OLD MAN'S HOODED EYES...
...NOR IS SHE AWARE OF THE SNOWFALL BEGINNING OUTSIDE...
...AS REALITY BEGINS TO TAKE ON THE WARPED, MADCAP ASPECTS OF HER DREAM...
...AND THE LAUGHTER OF CHAOS ECHOES SOFTLY ACROSS THE LAND.


ALCATRAZ.
TAKE IT SLOW, TAKE IT EASY--
--STEP AT A TIME--
--LAST THING YOU WANT TO DO...
... IS SPOOK HER.
WHY ARE YOU WAY OUT HERE?
WHAT'S WRONG, MADDY?
"WHAT'S WRONG?"
ALEX, YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
I THOUGHT I'D FOUND SOMEONE TO SHARE MY LIFE WITH.
INSTEAD, I'M DROWNING IN GRIEF AND TERROR AND PAIN.
PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO KILL ME-- THEY'VE ERASED THE FACT OF MY VERY EXISTENCE-- THEY'VE STOLEN MY BABY--
-- AND I HAVEN'T A CLUE OF A REASON, EXCEPT THAT IT'S BOUND UP WITH MY HUSBAND AND THE LIFE HE LEADS.
I'M NO MUTANT, ALEX-- I'M NOT AN X-MAN--
-- BUT I'M PART OF YOUR WAR!
I'M ONE OF THE NONCOMBATANTS WHO ALWAYS GETS MAIMED AND SLAUGHTERED BY THE BULLETS AIMED AT YOU!
MY WHOLE LIFE, I'VE FOUGHT TO STAND ALONE-- TO DEPEND ON NOBODY BUT MYSELF--
-- ONLY NOW, I CAN'T!
SO YOU WANT TO QUIT?
HUMAN BEINGS CAN'T SURVIVE IN YOUR LEAGUE, ALEX-- SO WHAT'S THE SENSE OF EVEN TRYING?
HEY, LADY, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S SUFFERING.
OR WHO WANTED A NORMAL LIFE...
... ONLY TO SEE IT BLOWN TO BITS.
THE WOMAN I LOVE-- LORNA DANE-- LEADS THE MARAUDERS.
SHE HOVERED RIGHT ABOVE WHERE WE'RE STANDING...
... AND DARED ME TO KNOCK HER OUT OF THE SKY.


SHE SAID, IF I DIDN'T, I'D BE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING SHE DID AFTERWARDS.
I KNEW IT WASN'T REALLY LORNA SPEAKING, THAT SHE WAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF ANOTHER MARAUDER, MALICE.
LORNA WASN'T THE VILLAIN, MADELYNE...
...SHE WAS A VICTIM!
MALICE LOVED IT, WATCHING ME SQUIRM.
MADE HER DAY.
I FACED HOBSON'S CHOICE-- WHATEVER I DECIDED, EITHER WAY I'D LOSE.
SO I MADE MY DECISION--
--I FIRED--
-- AND WATCHED HER MAGNETIC SHIELD DEFLECT MY PLASMA BLAST.
SKAKOW
IF WORST COMES TO WORST, ALL I'LL HAVE LEFT OF LORNA'S AND MY LIFE TOGETHER ARE MEMORIES.
BUT YOU, MADELYNE, YOU GUYS HAVE A CHILD. IF YOU GIVE UP, WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM?
I LOVED AND TRUSTED YOUR BROTHER. AND HE LET ME DOWN.
HE WASN'T THERE WHEN HIS FAMILY NEEDED HIM.
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE THAT.
AND I'LL NEVER LET MYSELF BECOME SO VULNERABLE AGAIN.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO STAND ALONE.
IF THE X-MEN IS ANYTHING, IT'S A FAMILY. I'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN TO REALIZE THAT. WE'RE STRONG BECAUSE WE STAND BY EACH OTHER.
THAT WAY, WE CAN SURVIVE ANYTHING.
THAT WAY, NO MATTER WHAT...
...WE'LL WIN.
YOU SURE?
BET MY LIFE ON IT.
THEN, CHUM...
...SO WILL I!
NEXT: The DARK BEFORE THE DAWN!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

"Petey, Pig 'o My Heart! Marry me! Hug me! Squeeze me the way a fashion-conscious water buffalo should be squeezed!"

—MARY JANE WATER BUFFALO
MARVEL TALES #208

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH!

After guiding Marvel Comics to dazzling new creative heights for the past nine and a half years, *Jim Shooter* has stepped down from his position as the Editor in Chief. Unquestionably one of the most talented creative people in the entire comic book industry, Jim was always spearheading the development of new formats, new concepts and exciting new comic book series! (Like The 'Nam! X-Factor! Power Pack! The Punisher! New Mutants! And others!)

Marvel produced its very first Graphic Novels, Limited Series and "Direct-Only" comics under his superb editorial leadership. His accomplishments are too numerous to list here. Suffice it to say that he will be missed.

THE NEW ORDER BEGINS . . .

Our new Editor in Chief is none other than *Two-Fisted Tom DeFalco* . . . A man who needs no introduction to Marveldom Assembled! (But who will be real miffed if he doesn't get one!)

The subject of one of our Bullpen *Pro Files* a few months back, Tom is a fifteen-year veteran in the comics biz. Since he joined Marvel in 1980, he served as the editor of our *Spider-Man* line of comics and later as the writer of such popular series as *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Machine Man* and *Firestar*. As our Executive Editor, he also helped establish Marvel's *Star Comics* line.

We're sure you join with us in wishing Tom the best of luck in his new job!

Pro File on: MARK GRUENWALD

Editor on: *AVENGERS, WEST COAST AVENGERS, SOLO AVENGERS, IRON MAN, OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE Deluxe and Trade Paperback Editions*
Marvel freelance credits (past): *Scripts: SPIDER-WOMAN, MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE, THOR, BIZARRE ADVENTURES, HAWKEYE Limited Series, SQUADRON SUPREME Limited Series*
Marvel freelance credits (present): *Scripts: CAPTAIN AMERICA, D.P. 7*
My place of birth is: *Oshkosh, Wisconsin*
My hobbies are: *Playing with my daughter Sara's toys, amassing a videotape library, and doing "butt-dives" into inner tubes at Ralph Macchio's pool*
If they were making a movie of my life, I'd like to see my part played by: *Edward James Olmos*
The single work which I am most proud of is: *SQUADRON SUPREME #2*
My oddest habit is: *I'm a neatness freak and I constantly force the people who work with me to clean up their clutter.*
The reason I got into comics was: *So I could write stories as good as the ones that got me hooked on the medium when I was a kid.*
People who knew me in High School thought I was: *Going to go far, preferably as far away from them as possible.*
My greatest accomplishment outside the comics field is: *Winning the Cresskill, New Jersey Butt-Diving Championship for the past two years*
My favorite performers are: *Talking Heads, the Three Stooges, and Shintaro Katsu*
The last good book I read was: *THE DISCOVERERS by Daniel J. Boostrum*
The last good movie I saw was: *RAISING ARIZONA*
The biggest influences on my work include: *Stan Lee, Gardner Fox, and Philip K. Dick*
My greatest unfulfilled ambition in the comics field is: *To write CAPTAIN AMERICA forever.*
The worst part of my job is: *Saying goodbye to my daughter every morning.*
When nobody's looking I like to: *Rearrange my office.*
The one thing I really want the world to know about me is: *I'm the hardest working editor in the business today.*

CHECKLIST

- ☐ **DAREDEVIL #248** — Turning point!
- ☐ **NEW MUTANTS #57**
- ☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #32** — Continuing the six-part epic that runs through *all three Spider-titles!* Part Four begins here, courtesy of J.M. DeMATTEIS, MIKE ZECK and BOB McLEOD!!
- ☐ **WEST COAST AVENGERS #26**
- ☐ **STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI #12** — The citizens of earth believe that the Strikeforce has turned traitor!
- ☐ **CONAN THE KING #43**
- ☐ **X-MEN ANNUAL #11** — Guest-starring Captain Britain, focusing on Wolverine, and featuring the menace of the Horde! Face it, true believer, this one has it all! Written by CHRIS CLAREMONT with art by ALAN DAVIS and PAUL NEARY!
- ☐ **THE HOUSE II** — It's the official Marvel adaptation of the hit horror movie! Written by RALPH MACCHIO! Art by ALAN KUPPERBERG!
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #294** — The penultimate chapter of Spidey's battle with Kraven the Hunter!
- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #335** — The *new* Captain America and Bucky go on their first mission!
- ☐ **FALLEN ANGELS (Limited Series) #8**
- ☐ **STRANGE TALES #8** — Featuring Cloak & Dagger and the dark side of Dr. Strange!
- ☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #52** — With Wolverine!
- ☐ **HEADMASTERS (Limited Series) #3** — The Decepticons themselves become Headmasters!
- ☐ **SPIDER-MAN DIGEST #6** — Reprinting *Amazing Spider-Man #68–70*, by STAN LEE and JOHN ROMITA, SR.
- ☐ **AVENGERS #285**
- ☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #337** — Guest-starring X-Factor!
- ☐ **MARVEL TALES #205** — Reprinting *Marvel Team-Up #69*, by CHRIS CLAREMONT and JOHN BYRNE.
- ☐ **PUNISHER #4** — The Punisher gets shot!
- ☐ **SILVER SURFER #5** — Obliteration!
- ☐ **X-MEN #223** — Featuring the Freedom Force!
- ☐ **G.I. JOE #65** — The Joes get their own Space Shuttle!
- ☐ **MARVEL SAGA #24**
- ☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #200** — It's a special *double-sized* anniversary issue, guest-starring Red Sonja!
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #308**
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